Tamil TIMES

VOL XXIII No.9 ISSN 0266-4488 SEPTEMBER 2004 90p

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka .....£15/US$25
Australia AusS45
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USA .....US$35
Canada .....Can$40
All other countries .....£20/US$35

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"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it"

- Voltaire

Tamil TIMES

ISSN 0266 – 44 88
Vol. XXIII No.9
SEPTEMBER 2004

Published by:
TAMIL TIMES LTD
PO Box 121, Sutton,
Surrey SM1 3TD
United Kingdom
Phone: 020 – 8644 0972
Fax: 020 – 8241 4557

Email: admin@tamiltimes.org
editor@tamiltimes.org
p.rajanayagam@btconnect.com
Website: http://www.tamiltimes.org

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka.....£15/US$25
Australia.....Aus$45
(Australian Bank cheques only)
USA.....US$35
Canada.....Can$40
All other countries.....£20.US$35

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Cover Page

Women tea-pluckers in Sri Lanka's lushtea plantations. Story on page 22 by courtesy of TamilNet

A Lamentable History

This month the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) have been celebrating their fifty-eighth and fifty-third founding anniversaries.

The UNP was founded in 1946 with what was left of the Ceylon National Congress and the Sinhala Maha Sabha together with an assortment of 'independent' politicians. Its founding leader was the late D S Senanayake who became the first Prime Minister following the first parliamentary election held in 1947. The late S W R D Bandaranaike, who was number two in the UNP hierarchy, broke away from the UNP and founded the SLFP in 1951 when he found that old DS was grooming his son, Dudley Senanayake, to succeed him.

Between them both these political parties have presided over the destinies of Sri Lanka since being granted independence from British colonial rule in 1948. It is therefore right to regard these parties and their leaderships as responsible for what the country has passed through and the present state of the country and its people. Except for the glory of the power and patronage they enjoyed while occupying the seats of Government, in the context of the abuse of power, corruption, insitutionalised political violence and war the country has experienced over the last four decades, many people with justification may think that both these parties have very little else to celebrate about.

If nation-building should have been a primary objective for any newly independent country, the leaderships of these parties singularly lacked the vision to undertake that task. On the contrary, by their political sins of commission and omission, while in Government or in Opposition, they massively contributed to the dismemberment of the Nation. Pursuing policies and practices which were fundamentally undemocratic, grossly discriminatory and inherently divisive, they were complicit in fanning the flames of ethno-centric nationalism which before long was to plunge the country and its three major communities - Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims - to be caught up in a horrendous armed conflict.

The sheer opportunism, hypocrisy and unprincipled conduct of the past leaderships of these parties are only matched by the enormity of the injustice they perpetrated upon the minorities and the enmity they helped to create among the communities.

In the immediate aftermath of independence, it was the UNP Government under D S Senanayake, in which J R Jayawardene was a leading figure holding the post of Finance Minister, that deprived the citizenship and voting rights of plantation workers of Indian origin numbering nearly two million in 1948. After having subjected these workers and their successive generations to live as 'stateless and voteless' people in semi-slave conditions for nearly 40 years, it was the same J R Jayawardene when he later became President, for reasons of political expediency took steps to remedy the injustice committed against these people.

Though having a reputation of being a cultured politician with progressive ideas, it was the founder-leader of the SLFP, Mr Bandaranaike, who in his greed for gaining political power ignited the Sinhala-Tamil conflict in 1956 with his "Sinhala Only in 24 hours" slogan. When he realised that he had to make amends by entering into the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact providing for regional administration for the Northeast where the use of Tamil language in official transactions was to be permitted, it was Jayawardene at the helm of the UNP, along with powerful sections of the Buddhist clergy, who mounted a virulent island-wide campaign accusing Bandaranaike of "betraying the motherland" and demanding the abrogation of the Pact. Unable to withstand the resulting pressure, Mr Bandaranaike tore up the Pact. It was the incendiary device of linguistic nationalism that Mr Bandaranaike ignited that began to explode in later years claiming tens of thousands of lives. Now the Tamil language has also been constitutionally declared as an "offical language" thanks to the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of July 1987, and it was the same Jayawardene who did it!

More significantly, without addressing the basic grievances of the Tamil people, it was the extravagant use of military force by Governments headed by both parties to suppress peaceful, non-violent protest campaigns launched by democratic Tamil political parties, the use of arbitrary powers of indiscriminate arrest and detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the communal pogroms of 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983 directed at the Tamil people that further alienated them leading to demands for secession. .

Both parties when in power have displayed a proclivity to manipulate the constitution and the democratic process to remain in power. The SLFP-led Government that came to power in 1970 under Premier Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike took the opportunity of introducing the first Republican Constitution to extend the life of the Parliament by two more years. The constitutional skulduggery

(continued on next page)

News Review

• CWC joins Government

After months of dilly-dallying, the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) has decided to extend its 'unconditional support' to the UPFA Government, party leader Arumugam Thondaman MP announced at a press conference on 3 September in Colombo.

"A main reason for this decision was our confidence in President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and Media Minister Mangala Samaraweera. We took this decision to assist the Government to go ahead with its development programmes and restart the long stalled peace progress," Thondaman said adding, "During the last five months, the CWC which closely observed the difficulties which the UPFA minority government was facing in taking forward development programmes and the peace process decided to extend its unconditional support to the Government." Thondaman added. The eight CWC Parliamentarians would extend their unconditional support to the Government so that it would not be impeded in its development programmes which are needed for the future welfare of the country, he said accompanied by five sitting CWC MPs.

The CWC with its eight MPs would maintain their independence while extending their support and cooperation to the Government in a similar manner as they functioned during their previous alliance with the UNF government in the best interests of the country, he said. The CWC would vote with President Kumaratunga's alliance at the November 10 National budget and other electoral reforms which it had been unable to push through earlier, he added.

Answering questions from pressmen whether the CWC welcomed the peace process to re-commence on the basis of the controversial ISGA proposal of the LTTE, Thondaman replied in the affirmative saying the talks have to start from some point.

It can be the best starting point for the basis of negotiations with the LTTE. In fact, his grandfather Saumiyamurthy Thondaman had advocated an interim administration to the LTTE for five years, he said.

The question of Ministry portfolios to the CWC was not something the CWC had insisted upon but would be accepted in the interests of the plantation community if deemed necessary, he said. There were certain issues with regard to the welfare of the plantation community which the CWC would discuss with the UPFA leadership in due course, the CWC leader said.

President Kumaratunga informed Government Parliamentary group meeting on 5 September that only one Cabinet portfolio and two deputy ministries would be given to the CWC. However, she did not mention what ministries would be given to those nominated by Mr. Thondaman. She said Mr. Thondaman at talks with her had indicated he would not accept any portfolio but instead would nominate CWC members for the Cabinet post and two deputy ministerial posts.

The CWC appears to have arrived at a strange arrangement on the issue of where its contingent of MPs will be seated in the House. Out of its 9 MPs, only three who will become a Minister and two deputies would be seated on the government side while the rest would occupy their seats on the Opposition side which prompted one observer to say: "That sums up Thonda's true position – one foot in the Government and the other in the Opposition.

Welcoming the offer of support by the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), which would give the UPFA a majority in Parliament, Ms. Kumaratunga said, "Every support we get from any group is always welcome. We welcome it with open arms."

Political observers say that the stability of the UPFA government led by President Kumaratunga has been enhanced with the decision of the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), with its 8 MPs, to provide unconditional support to the government thereby ensuring a parliamentary majority.

• JVP Campaign

Virtually holding the government to ransom with its 40 strong contingent of MPs in Parliament, the JVP would certainly not have viewed with much favour the decision of the CWC to offer unconditional support to the Chandrika Kumaratunga-led government. The past few months have witnessed a manifest worsening of the relations between the JVP and the rest of the governing UPFA coalition.

While President and her senior colleagues have been making all the efforts they can to resurrect the process, the JVP has been engaged in a country-wide campaign holding public meetings against recommencement of talks with the LTTE which has been insisting that its ISGA proposal must be the basis for any resumed talks. Its opposition to the contents of the ISGA proposal can be understood, but while being part of the government and holding cabinet portfolios, the JVP leaders going round the country deploying nationalistic rhetoric whipping up opposition to the whole peace process itself verges on utter irresponsibility for a party in government. The leader and spokesman for Jatika Hela Urumaya JHU), Ven. Ellawala Medhananda Thera, was absolutely right when he pointed out that the JVP, though part of the government and holding cabinet portfolios, was still acting like a party in the opposition and were launching a poster and a public awareness campaign around the country instead of tabling their opposition within the government and cabinet.

All the signs are that this unholy political alliance into which Chandrika was forced into is beginning to unravel.

(continued from page 3)

in which J R Jayawardene indulged in is unmatched in any country which could call itself democratic. By enabling an amendment to the 1972 constitution, he underwent a constitutional metamorphosis as 'Executive President' arrogating enormous powers to himself. Later by means of a subterfuge of a heavily rigged referendum, he extended the life of the Parliament elected in July 1977 to 1989, that is, 12 long years!

Post 1977, the people also witnessed the common practice of institutionalised political violence, increased politicisation of the country's civil and public services, and the use of the police and armed services for the furtherance of the interests of the party in power.

Both parties have faced insurrections by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the first in 1971 when a SLFP-led Government was in power and the second a much more violent one which lasted from 1987 to 1989 when the UNP was in power. Both were suppressed violently, but the latter one more brutally.

Since 1948 the UNP has held the reins of Government for almost 26 years and the SLFP for 26 years. If one were to look at their respective records as the UNP and the SLFP are celebrating their birth anniversaries, they leave a lamentable history of having ill-served the country and its people who trusted and elected them.

On the positive side, however, less on the basis of principles or conviction, and more due to force of circumstances internally, regionally and internationally over which they have little control, both these parties have in recent years been adopting a flexible and accommodative approach to the ethnic conflict and its resolution.

D. M. Jayaratne, a veteran Parliamentarian and Telecommunication Ministe, slammed the JVP for talking 'out of turn' without consulting the party hierarchy at public meetings regarding the ongoing peace process. Accusing the JVP of 'lacking discipline', the Minister giving a short lesson on the principle of collective responsibility said, "It is not up to me to instruct them as to what they should do like in a school. They must realise this lack of responsibility. They must try to recognise the collective responsibility the coalition partners have."

While the LTTE is threatening that the country would be plunged into war again unless the government was prepared to resume talks on the basis of its ISGA proposal, the JVP leaders publicly threaten to pull out of the government and also threaten to lead the masses on a fight to the death if the Government agreed to talks on that basis. And when the announcement was made of the government's decision to provide duty free vehicle facilities to the LTTE, the JVP leaders went public criticizing the decision.

Again when the Secretary General of the government's Peace Secretariat, Jayantha Dhanapala, announced in Jaffna that the government would be prepared to discuss the LTTE's ISGA proposal together with the government's proposal for an interim authority which was being drawn up, the JVP sought to undermine his credibility in the eyes of the LTTE and public. Speaking at a public meeting, JVP Propaganda Secretary, Wimal Weerawansa, said, "Jayantha Dhanapala made a statement in Jaffna that the government was in the process of formulating a set of proposals for the interim administration of the north and east which would be discussed along with the ISGA. I challenge him to prove this. The JVP as a key partner in the government would have known about it if such a set of proposals were being drafted."

The antics of the JVP leaders would appear to have provoked President Kumaratunga to hit back. Addressing a meeting of SLFP MPs and organisers, she said, "The SLFP has the strength to meet any challenge and is a party that does not have blood on its hands unlike those who have overgrown beards, wear red headbands and walk the streets carrying guns and bombs, shouting themselves hoarse," adding "We have faced bigger challenges. We have proved this in our 53-year history."

However, the JVP is continuing with its country-wide campaign. It has described the aid package of US$ 4.5 billion pledged to Sri Lanka in Tokyo by Donor countries in June last year as a 'ploy' to divide the country. Addressing a meeting of the Patriotic National Movement, (PNM), held at the provincial town of Mr. Wimal Weerawansa, accused the UNP, and the pro-LTTE NGOs and the international community for attempting to force the government into a situation where a 'no' was impossible to the LTTE's ISGA proposals. "All these people are trying to force the government to a point where it would have to say 'yes' to the ISGA proposals to obtain a loan of $4.5 billion in order to bring the cost of living down.

However one of JVP's leading figures hinted at a change in its basic position of resuming talks with the LTTE during what has been described as "an informal chat with media persons at the office of The Hindu" on 6 September. While rejecting the LTTE's ISGA proposal, the JVP Polit Bureau member and Sri Lanka's Minister for Culture and National Heritage, Vijitha Herath, has said that talks with the Tamil Tigers could revolve around an interim administration. He said the ISGA could not be the starting point for talks. Efforts must be made to arrive at a "midpoint" that took into consideration the views of all political parties and interested sections.

While refusing to put forward alternative proposals that could help in finding a "final solution," he said "some amount of devolution of power and decentralisation of administration" could help resolve the conflict with the LTTE. However, the final solution would have to be decided over the negotiating table, and he could not be expected to spell it out in advance.

Asked whether the JVP would accept devolution on the lines of the Union of Regions proposed by the Chandrika Government in 2000, he said not only the JVP, but the LTTE too had rejected it at the time. He did not specify whether the JVP was willing to concede "more" than what was proposed in 2000. He said it was not a question of more or less devolution than what was envisaged then. Rather, it should be "different" from the 2000 proposals. The JVP's vision of a final settlement was based on the principle of "equal rights for all on an equal basis." The party favoured retention of the unitary structure of Sri Lanka, while its coalition partner, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, supported devolution within a united Sri Lanka.

Arguing for a midpoint, he, however, said the nature of the final settlement should not be based on foreign models of India or Switzerland, but must have Sri Lankan features. Any initiative taken by the Sri Lankan Government without taking into consideration the views of the JVP was bound to fail, he said.

• President on peace process

President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, has ruled out a return to war in Sri Lanka and expressed the hope that the faltering peace process could be resurrected. She also has referred to "windows of opportunities" opening up with possible political realignments in obvious reference to the decision of the Ceylon Workers Congress to join the Government.

As far as her government is concerned, the "Government is totally committed to doing all that is within its power to prevent the situation from degrading into military action," Ms. Kumaratunga told foreign correspondents during a press briefing in Colombo on 3 September.

The President was confident that peace talks with the LTTE could resume. "After decades of fighting, I think the light at the end of the tunnel is the brightest now," she said.

Asked if the continued stalemate, coupled with recent hardline positions voiced by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), could result in the island stumbling into war, the President said, "I don't think the LTTE has much to gain by going back to war," Kumaratunga said, adding the Tigers too were concerned about an international backlash if they sparked a resumption of war.. Moreover, with recent international opinion critical of the Tigers, she was hopeful that the LTTE would be "sensitive" to such views, thereby preventing a relapse into fighting. She expressed confidence that none of the main parties to the conflict wanted a return to fighting.

On the offers made by Colombo to restart talks, Ms. Kumaratunga said the LTTE was remaining "very intransigent," despite the Government scaling down its position from that of discussing a final outcome along with the LTTE's demand for an interim administration for the Northeast to discussing the interim administration issue alone initially, and taking up the final outcome for a discussion at a later date. The Government had also said that the Interim Council could function for three months, after which talks on a final settlement could begin.

The Government had gone 75 per cent of the way, but the LTTE was unwilling to come the 25 per cent to meet it, she said. She said that her Government was committed to federalism. Asked what kind of federalism she was thinking of, she said that there were different forms of federalism and different system of devolution, and a choice could be made during talks between the Government and the LTTE and in the consultations in the National Reconciliation Council, which she was planning to set up.

Questioned about the LTTE's charge that the Sri Lankan

Army had been supporting the anti-Prabhakaran faction led by the former Eastern commander Karuna, she said that the Government had no role in supporting Karuna. The LTTE's former military commander "is as much a terrorist as Mr. Prabakaran is" and "supporting one terrorist against another will only lead us into a vicious cycle." she said. The Government had asked for "factual evidence" from the LTTE to support its charge, but they had not got any, she added. Kumaratunga revealed that when the crisis in the LTTE was looming large after Karuna broke away from Prabhakaran in March this year, the Government offered to send its security forces to clear Batticaloa town and the entire Batticaloa district, including the LTTE-controlled areas, of people moving around with weapons. But the LTTE did not take the offer, she said.

● Balasingham blames President

Reacting to the views expressed by President Kumaratunga, llacing the ball back in the government's court, chief negotiator and political advisor of the Tamil Tigers, Anton Balasingham, has told a top Norwegian delegation at a meeting in London that it was up to President Chandrika Kumaratunga to revive the stalled peace process.

The Norwegian delegation led by Special Envoy Erik Solheim and comprising Norwegian Ambassador to Sri Lanka Hans Brattskar met Mr Balasingham at his residence in London on 31 August in a fresh bid to find the ways out to resume the peace process and to urge the parties to uphold the truce to its very letter and spirit.

"'If the ceasefire agreement is to be upheld strictly and the peace talks are to resume on the basis of the truce agreement, President Kumaratunga's government should demonstrate its willingness by acts of goodwill, instead of using Military Intelligence and paramilitary groups for covert attacks on the LTTE cadres,'" Colombo-based Tamil daily *Sudar Oli* today quoted Mr Balasingham as saying in the meeting, which lasted over three hours.

He said that from the day, Ms Kumaratunga's coalition party was elected to office, it has been engaging in activities that have resulted in creating more problems to uphold the truce while spoiling the conducive atmosphere for peace talks. "'If the government removes the paramilitary groups from the East in accordance with the truce agreement, it would end a number of security-related problems. The government should immediately give up activities that it imagines could weaken the LTTE. If the talks are to resume, the government should create conducive climate both in words and deeds, instead of engaging in activities to provoke the LTTE," Balasingham had said.

● Wider consultation

Addressing her party members at the 53rd anniversary celebrations held in Galle in the south of the island on Saturday, 4 September, President Chandrika Kumaratunga pledged to push forward the stalled peace process by opening consultations with opposition parties to ascertain their stance on negotiations with Tamil Tigers and their ISGA proposal.

The idea for consultations with the opposition parties and relevant groups was said to be an effort to forge a common consensus in the wake of the insistence by the LTTE that their demand for an Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) should be met first.

Reportedly Chandrika explained that the government was trying to get the LTTE to the negotiating table, though it was a difficult process, and added that "the process is slowly progressing, but we are not going backwards and we are doing the maximum."

Referring to clashes between rival groups mainly in the east Chandrika declared that it was a complex situation, but all steps should be taken to avoid going to a war situation and the armed groups should be stopped. "We are bound to find a solution to the ethnic conflict which would be acceptable to all communities and meet the aspirations of these communities. We will not betray our duty to protect all communities," Chandrika said.

● UNP view crucial

The attitude of the United National Party (UNP) to the consultation exercise by the President will be crucial. The political rivalry between the UNP and the SLFP has assumed almost a tribal character, and one would not bet on the UNP, particularly its leader Ranil Wickramasinghe, cooperating fully with the President in the proposed consultation exercise.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued on 24 August, the UNP claimed credit for bringing about a ceasefire within 3 months of assuming office leading to six rounds of direct negotiations between the government and LTTE. "It was a singular achievement of that administration that we were able to bring hostilities to an end by the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement within three months of the formation of the government. It is important to remember that, in the midst of many difficulties, our government was able to maintain the cease-fire throughout its period of office spanning two years and three months....This laid the foundation for the commencement of a direct dialogue between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in Sattahip, Thailand, in September 2002. The continuing dialogue, over six rounds of discussions from September 2002 until April 2003 addressed a variety of political and economic issues underpinning a durable settlement of the ethnic conflict in our country.

At the conclusion of the third session of peace talks in Oslo, "the parties agreed on 5th December 2002 'to explore a solution founded on the principle of internal self- determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil speaking peoples based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka'. The parties acknowledged that the solution has to be acceptable to all communities," the UNP statement said..

On the issue of the interim administrative structure for the Northeast, the UNP statement said, "Several proposals regarding the establishment of an interim structure, and suggestions in respect of its powers and responsibilities within the framework of Sri Lanka's constitutional system, had been submitted by the United National Front Government..." prior to the LTTE submitting its ISGA proposal on 31 October 2003.

The UNP statement recalled that the UNF Government in response to the ISGA proposal had stated in a statement 1 November 2003 that "the document outlining the LTTE's vision regarding the framework for a political solution to the conflict, differs in fundamental respects from the proposals submitted by the Government..... Both documents contain proposals in respect to which no agreement has been reached so far. While the disparities between the positions of the parties are evident, the Government is convinced that the way forward lies through direct discussion of the issues arising from both sets of proposals."

The UNP statement further said, "The substance of the UNF Government's response to the ISGA proposals of the LTTE was that the government was prepared to enter into a direct dialogue with the LTTE, with the benefit of facilitation by the Norwegian Government, on the subject of the ISGA proposal."

The UNP statement also accused the present UPFA government of a failure to adopt a consistent position on the ISGA issue It said, "we are saddened by the steadfast refusal of the present UPFA government to adopt a coherent and internally consistent stand in respect of their attitude to the current ISGA proposal."

Warning about the present volatile situation, the UNP said,

"The straws are again in the wind and there is widespread unease about the fragility of the ceasefire. Within the last few days the Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission is reported to have sounded a note of warning regarding the need for urgent remedial action in this regard. In particular, the volatile nature of the situation in the East Province is all too obvious."

• Welcome moves

Unfortunately for a long time, the image presented by leading sections of the Buddhist clergy in regard to the ethnic conflict has been one of one-sided Sinhala-Buddhist extremism. Despite the mergence of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), there is clear evidence that things are changing and changing for the better.

Reflecting this change, the Venerable Thibbotuwawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Mahanayake Thera of the Malwatte Chapter has recently expressed his willingness to meet an LTTE delegation and discuss grievances of the Tamil speaking people, though he also urged the Tigers to be more flexible and stop child recruitment. It has been reported that at a meeting with an Upcountry Peoples' Front delegation led by P. Chandrasekeran, the new Mahanayake also agreed he would negotiate with the JVP in a bid to get their leaders to talk to the LTTE.

The Mahanayake had said the the LTTE leadership should come down from what he described as their inflexible stand and face the realities and unless there was such flexibility it would be difficult to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

The Mahanayake had also said that he had held separate discussions with the President, the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader on the need for a southern consensus on the North and East conflict and that he would soon meet all three leaders together in a bid to reach an agreement.

In the meantime, the Tamil Tigers are reported to have said that they were willing to meet with the Buddhist Maha Nayaka Theras and the main constituent of the United Peoples Freedom Alliance Government, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). LTTE political wing leader S.P. Thamilchelvan made this announcement in Kilinochchi when addressing reporters on 26 August. Thamilchelvan also said that the LTTE was ready to hold talks for peace with any concerned party.

The Inter Religious Peace Foundation has commended Ven. Thibbotuwawe Sri Sumangala Mahanayake Thera of the Malwatte Chapter for boldly coming forward to initiate a dialogue with the LTTE with a view to finding a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem in a manner acceptable to all parties.

The foundation in a press release issued recently said the Malwatte Mahanayake Thera's intervention in this matter is timely and it would earn the honour and respect of all races and religions in this country. The foundation which has requested the Mahanayake Thera to pursue this matter in collaboration with Mahanayake Theras of all Nikayas and participation of all other religions has also sought an opportunity for some religious leaders to meet the Mahanayake Thera to pursue this matter further.

• Eastern Front

In the meantime the viability of the ceasefire was being frequently tested particularly in the east of the country where the split in the LTTE with its former commander Karuna's defection has exacerbated the situation with reported daily incidents of violence, including killings and killings. The absence of regular meetings between the LTTE local leadership and the security forces that had been a practice in the past, since the split in March this year, has further aggravated the situation. In this context the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission has been trying hard to get the parties meet again on a regular basis have so far not been successful The meeting fixed to take place on 7 September between the Sri Lanka Army and the LTTE in Batticaloa has been postponed indefinitely as the LTTE informed the SLMM about their inability to attend the meeting, according to a spokesman to the Nordic truce monitors, Oskar Solnes. SLMM Chief Major Gen. (Rtd) Trond Furuhovde initially fixed the Army-LTTE meeting for last Friday, 3 September, but it was rescheduled for 7 September with the agreement of both parties.

Though the LTTE has not given any reason for their inability to attend the meeting, it is understood that the LTTE Political leader in Batticaloa Kaushalyan and Special Commander Ramesh and Ampara leaders who visited Kilinochchi on a Sri Lanka Air Force helicopter have not returned to Batticaloa following their meeting with their leaders in Kilinochchi.

Meanwhile a report in the TamilNet said that Mr. E. Kousalyan, head of the LTTE's political division for the Batticaloa- Amparai district was quoted in Uthayan, a Jaffna daily, as saying that talks with the Sri Lankan armed forces were futile.

• Killing spree

The killing within LTTE-controlled area of Batticaloa of LTTE's former political wing chief for Ampara, Vasu Bawa and the regional rehabilitation chief Yoga on Friday, 20 August, accompanied by accusations by the LTTE that killings could not have been carried out without the support of the security forces, triggered off a number of attacks against the government and non-LTTE groups. Bawa, Yogi and their entourage were returning from a meeting in Vakarai when they were bombed and gunned down by a group of unidentified gunmen.

Shortly after the killings, a police sergeant was killed in Kalmunai. The following day a soldier was injured in a grenade attack in Mankerni, north of Batticaloa. On Sunday, 22 August,a grenade had been found in front of a shop belonging to a Muslim trader, near the Saddam Hussein village. The trader, Mohideen Bawa Mohamed had informed the Army who defused it. On the following Monday morning a grenade was exploded in front of a Tamil school - Siththandy Vidyalayam - some 17 km North of Batticaloa on the Batticaloa-Polonnaruwa Road. The same afternoon unidentified gunmen fired at a foot patrol at Kayankerni on the A-15 Road, injuring a soldier. After this the Army had made an announcement that it would be forced to block the access of the LTTE into government-controlled areas in Batticaloa, if the attacks on troops continued. A former LTTE cadre turned military intelligence operative was gunned down on Monday, 23 August at a Hindu temple in Wellawatte in Colombo. On August 24 morning another Karuna supporter was gunned down when he was produced before the Akkaraipattu courts.

In a letter to the SLMM, LTTE political Wing Chief S.P. Thamilselvan blamed Army personnel at the last check point the slain LTTE local leaders had passed, for tipping off the assailants of the movement of the two victims. Responding to this allegation, the Army said that that both Bawa, Yoga and the two female cadres who accompanied them had not revealed their identities (false names were given) at the check points and had even been standing at the civilian queues. Bawa had given his name as Jeevaratnam.

• War of words

Addressing Navy officers at the Rangala Navy camp, following an inspection tour of Navy Headquarters, acting Defence Minister Ratnasiri Wickremenayake joined the war of words when he issued a warning that the LTTE should not push the government towards a war situation by continuing with the killings, targeting police and security service personnel and the attacks on non-LTTE elements which he described as violations of the Ceasefire Agreement. He accused the LTTE of disturbing the climate of

peace in the country, by carrying out provocative actions not only in the East but also in Colombo and its suburbs. "There is an internal conflict in the LTTE. They should settle these problems between themselves. Instead it is trying to seek a solution to the internal conflict by killing and attacking people who aren't involved," he said. Denying the LTTE accusation that military personnel were in cahoots with the Karuna faction, he said. "Although we have been fairly tolerant so far, there is also a limit to our patience. I am warning the LTTE to observe the Ceasefire Agreement without violating it. As a government we aspire to achieve a lasting solution, but to do this, we want the LTTE's support for it. We cannot do it alone." Mr. Wickremanayake also claimed that as a government it cannot sit and watch when there are attacks on the people by the other party. "If it continues the government would answer in the same manner in the future in the name of peace," he said.

Taking a swipe at the beleaguered Scandinavian Ceasefire Monitors for not taking positive steps regarding complaints of violations of the Ceasefire Agreement, the Minister said, "The SLMM just sits in a room and issues statements without inquiring or taking action to prevent the recurrence of such violations in the future. The public should know who is breaching the Ceasefire Agreement, but although we have complained about the LTTE violations, the SLMM does not come forward to tell whether it is a violation or not. The people should be made aware of these things."

• SLMM Reacts

Reacting to the Minister's speech, a correspondent in a local daily said that the Minister "roaring like a lion threatening the Tigers and even the SLMM".

Addressing a group of military men at the Wanni military complex on Monday, the Deputy Defence Minister tore the ceasefire agreement to pieces saying that it was a one-sided document with the Army being prevented from entering Tiger areas while the rebels had access to government-controlled areas. He even threatened to get another set of truce monitors if the present ones did not do an impartial job and said the same applied to the facilitators. The ceasefire agreement, according to him, "has created two states within one country". He accused the LTTE of "engaging in violent activities while pretending to be involved in political work".

Rejecting the Minister's accusations, the SLMM hit back by saying his attack on the SLMM was one sided and baseless. "We are not here to police the country. We are on the invitation of the two parties based on the Ceasefire Agreement. We are fed up of being blamed and we have been wrongly blamed. The authorities should look into what they are doing regarding the security and should enhance it," SLMM deputy chief Hagrup Haukland said.

"We are here to inquire into incidents and try to find ways and means of ensuring that they don't recur," Mr. Haukland said.

Referring to the recent spate of killings he said that the government and the LTTE should be held responsible for the security situation in their respective areas and not the SLMM.

• TNA Campaign on ISGA

The LTTE leadership has called upon the Tamil Nationalist Alliance (TNA) MPs to concentrate and work from within and outside Parliament to promote the merits and need for the LTTE's ISGA proposal to be 'institutionalised and to campaign for the resumption of peace talks on the basis of the ISGA. This message was delivered to the 22 TNA MPs when they met the LTTE political wing leader S.P. Tamilchelvan in Kilinochchi during a three hour long meeting on 30 August. Mr. Thamilchelvan and Mr. Sampanthan met press briefly after TNA's meeting at the Planning Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers in Kilinochchi.

"We have created three different action groups for the tasks of promoting awareness in the Parliament, awareness in the South and advocacy in the diplomatic circles," Mr. R. Sampanthan, Secretary General of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) told the press in Kilinochchi following the meeting. He told reporters that the action groups would work among all sections of people, including the Muslim Community, Tamil Community in up-country, the Sinhala Community and importantly among the International Community.

Mr. Thamilchelvan said that there have been "baseless criticisms and malicious propaganda against the ISGA proposals and the Tamil nationhood" recently in the south and noted that he was satisfied with the outcome of the discussions he held with the TNA parliamentarians. "The LTTE would intensify our efforts to clarify and address ISGA issues at all levels including the International Community," he told the press.

In the meantime, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) urged the government to commence talks with the LTTE without delay on the basis of the ISGA (Interim Self-Governing Authority) proposals. Making a special statement, TNA Parliamentary Group Leader R. Sampanthan told Parliament on 6 September that the TNA feared that the Peace Process faced a severe crisis at the present juncture. The stability of the Cease Fire too was under threat. It was imperative that the present trend be terminated.

Mr Sampanthan further said, "The Interim Self-Governing Authority is urgently required to resettle and rehabilitate the several hundreds of thousands of displaced Tamil civilians in their homes and to rebuild the devastated North-East. Large numbers of Tamil civilians have not benefited from the Cease-Fire in the past thirty months. The Tamil people continue to suffer much deprivation and it would be an act of cruelty to expect the Tamil people to continue to suffer. The quality of works being executed in the North-East under various government agencies is questionable. If this situation continues, it would be an unpardonable waste of funds made available by International Governments and institutions for the benefit of the civilian population in the North-East."

"The Tamil people regard an Interim Self Governing Authority, properly functioning in the North-East, as the means to ensure that their immediate needs are addressed. It could also pave the way for a final solution in the North-East and give the Tamils the confidence that such a solution would be properly implemented."

Referring to the talks that the TNA Mps had with President Kumaratunga, Mr Sampanthan said, "When the Parliamentary Group of the Tamil National Alliance met Madam Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, the President on 10 June 2004, the President unambiguously stated that though she initially preferred talks on the ISGA proposals, along with talks on core issues, (more time being devoted to the former, and lesser time to the latter), she had become more flexible and that she was now prepared to commence talks only on the ISGA proposals, though she had reservations about some of the proposals. She also stated that when agreement is arrived at, in regard to the ISGA, such agreement should be reduced to writing, and that talks should commence on the final solution. We urged that implementation of the agreement on the ISGA should commence, because in the context of our past experiences, we would very much wish to see the implementation of the Government's commitment in regard to the ISGA. No mention was made to us of any alternative Government proposal in regard to the ISGA."

On the allegation against the LTTE of recruiting child soldiers, Mr Sampanthan told parliament, "The Tamil National Alliance has taken up with the LTTE the question of child recruitment, which has been a matter of concern. The Tamil National Alliance has been assured by the LTTE that the leadership of the LTTE disapproves of child recruitment. In conclusion the Tamil National Alliance would strongly urge the Government to commence talks with the LTTE without delay, on the basis of the

ISGA proposals and thereby implement the position enunciated by the President on 10th June, when she met the Tamil National Alliance delegation.

Mr Sampanthan emphasized that "all political forces in the country desirous of taking the peace process forward and sustaining the ceasefire should in a spirit of goodwill work together."

• Muslims stake claim in talks

As the pressure is mounting, both due to internal factors and external intervention, for the recommencement of peace talks between the Government and the LTTE, sections within the Muslim community have become worried that the interests of their people may become neglected if such talks were to restart only on the basis of the LTTE's ISGA proposal as demanded by the Tamil Tigers and the TNA.

Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) leader, Rauf Hakeem, speaking in parliament recently, called on the Government to clarify its position as regards the proposal recently referred to by Peace Secretariat Secretary General Jayantha Dhanapala in Jaffna, especially on the Muslim community's aspirations. He urged the Government not to sideline Muslim aspirations and a set of proposals by the Muslim community in its efforts to resume the stalled peace process. He lamented that Prof. G. L. Peiris, the opposition UNF spokesman, had urged the government to resume peace talks based on the ISGA proposals of the LTTE but had not made any reference to the provisions for a separate proposal from SLMC.

Mr Hakeem told parliament: "Whilst appreciating the Governments efforts at resuming the stalled direct peace negotiations, we consider it a matter of urgent public importance to invite the attention of the government that it has not only a moral duty but also an obligation arising out of the assurances given to the SLMC as an important stake holder in the peace process .The previous Government in submitting its proposals accommodated a specific provision for the SLMC to submit its own alternative proposals reflecting the aspirations of the Muslim community. The recommendations of the Tokyo Declaration and agreement reached in the peace negotiation, specifically referred to the need for the participation of a separate delegation to represent the Muslims.

"We note that in a statement attributed to Prof. G. L. Pieris, spokesman for the United National Party, urging the Government to resume peace talks based on the ISGA submitted by the LTTE, he too fails to make reference to the proposal submitted by the then Government and to the provisions made therein for a separate proposal from the SLMC.

"The SLMC wishes to clarify from the government its position as regards the proposal referred to by the Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat, particularly on the issue of Muslims aspirations. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress believes that the approach we advocate should be inclusive, foreclose no options, should ensure a sense of security for all Sri Lankan citizens and look to a future in which no community feels oppressed or marginalized. More concretely, we propose that both the peace negotiations and the settlement they ultimately reach must be within a framework of principles of democracy, participation, pluralism, devolution, human rights, social justice, fair and equitable development and public transparency and accountability.

"Rather than see the nation make precipitate decisions that might later prove ineffective but also immovable, we propose that we move towards a settlement that requires structured progress towards a longer-term constitutional settlement within agreed principles.

"We are hopeful that peace negotiations will soon reopen, and strongly urge that they be inclusive in the make-up and their agenda, and that specifically the Muslim community, with its own concerns, and its own history, be separately represented."

• Counter proposals

Meanwhile, SLMC General Secretary Hasan Ali said that the party had completed its counter proposals to the LTTE's Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal. According to him, the proposals were drafted in consultation with constitutional expert of the Hong Kong University, Prof. Yash Ghani. Prof. Ghani, it is learnt has been instrumental in drafting constitutions for Kenya and South Africa. Ali says the SLMC has taken six months to draft its counter proposals to the ISGA in consultation with Prof. Ghani.

The proposals according to Ali are not, at least for the present, meant for public discussion. He said the proposals would be presented to the relevant authority at the appropriate time. According to Ali the LTTE's ISGA proposals are not acceptable to the Muslims of the country and in the event talks are resumed between the LTTE and the government, the counter proposals of the SLMC should also be taken into consideration. "The LTTE says it will never allow power sharing arrangements on ethnic basis. But we want it. I don't understand how this problem is going to be solved if the LTTE too is adamant," he said.

He also said the SLMC would not approve any exchange of ideas about Sri Lankan Muslims between the LTTE and the government without consulting the SLMC. "We have the mandate from the Muslims in this country to take decisions for them. Therefore even if the President is discussing anything with the LTTE pertaining to Muslims, we should be notified," he said.

• Another blow

In what has been described as a 'blow against the SLMC leadership', the Supreme Court declared on 25 August that the decision taken by the SLMC leadership to expel three of its members (who are also Parliamentarians) was illegal. Parliamentarians Rishard Badiudeen, M. Najeeb and Hussein Bhaila were sacked from the party on disciplinary grounds. However the Supreme Court noted that the decision taken by the Congress to sack these MPs from the party was null and void especially as sufficient time was not granted to these three members to show cause for their alleged actions. The SLMC is reported to have given approximately 48 hours to these members to show cause on several allegations.

Hussein Bhaila was sacked from the party after he defected from the SLMC and joined the Government while Badiudeen and Najeeb were sacked over their alleged involvement in a campaign against SLMC Leader Rauff Hakeem suggesting allegedly a false sex scandal involving Mr Hakeem and a female named as one Mrs Kumari Cooray.

• New Muslim alliance

In another development, a cross-section of Muslims in Sri Lanka and abroad have got together to form the "United Muslim Ummah" (Arabic word for Community), which is to be officially launched on 8 September in Colombo.

The formation of the new party is reported to have the support of many Muslim MPs from the UPFA and UNP along with intellectuals, undergraduates, university dons, academics, community leaders and professionals etc. who had prepared a 'super constitution' unlike the present SLMC constitution which helped the leader to be very rigid and dictatorial, the spokesman claimed, a spokesman for the new alliance said.

He said, "The new party will have real democracy prevailing under the 'super constitution' which will not allow a one man show as in the SLMC. The leader would be guided by the 15-member Sura Council who would be guided by the supreme council consisting of 40 member professional Majilis and 40 member politburo which will function with independence."

The new party would invite all leaders of Muslim parties, especially the SLMC leader Rauf Hakeem, to dissolve their parties and to join the New United Muslim Ummah in the interest of the community and letters of invitation would go to all parties as this would be best forum for Muslims to speak in one voice. ❑

The peace process and the new situation

Jehan Perera

The Federal frame

In the political manouvering to find a way to get back to the negotiating table, it is important not to lose sight of the positive elements in the LTTE's ISGA proposals. It is true that the LTTE's proposals are maximalist in the common spirit of a first offer in the bargaining process. But it is the success of the peace process that impelled the LTTE to come up with a concrete expression of what it wanted in terms of political power and self government. This is a rarity in the sphere of internal conflict, especially armed insurrections that pits governments in long-term war against militant organisations.

A few years ago, an international seminar was held on the Sri Lankan conflict in Switzerland. At that seminar the problem posed by an absence of concrete LTTE proposals for a final solution was noted.

The only statements that the LTTE had come up with at that time, was that the solution should conform to the "Thimpu principles", be a "viable alternative to Tamil Eelam" and ensure "equal rights" to the Tamil people. The LTTE placed the onus on the government to come up with a solution that met with Tamil aspirations.

One of the participants at the seminar was the former head of a neighbouring country's intelligence agency.

He said that militant organisations seldom gave concrete proposals regarding their demands, and he had not encountered a single such example during the course of his work. He said this was because militant organisations feared that the demands they put down on paper would be whittled down in negotiations.

A few days ago, a research scholar from Nepal who was in Colombo said that the rebel movement in Nepal that has paralysed large parts of that country for the past five years or more, had not clearly stated what their goals were.

They couched their demands in general terms, such as the establishment of a constituent assembly, the abolition of the monarchy and the holding of fresh general elections. But they had little or nothing to say about what they wanted concretely, and for themselves, in terms of power sharing.

The insight that can be gleaned from both these observations is that the LTTE's willingness to put down its demands in concrete terms should be viewed as an opportunity, and not with dismay and hostility, as both the previous and present governments have done.

Even though it can be shown that the ISGA proposals are separatist in spirit, they are open ended proposals which, as power seeking propositions, are incomplete. And precisely because they are open ended and incomplete, they are susceptible to negotiations and to limits being placed on the powers that are sought.

When viewed in the abstract that the LTTE's ISGA proposals are separatist in orientation. For instance, they seek full judicial power over all matters that are subject to the ISGA.

This would mean that LTTE courts replace the Sri Lankan judicial system even in government-controlled areas such as Jaffna, with no right of appeal from them. Such full power is also sought for coastal waters and resources. The ISGA proposals also do not mention which authority will have final decision making power in many crucial areas of governance, such as defence, foreign affairs and trade.

The LTTE needs to bear in mind that what they are presently seeking is an interim arrangement. The degree of governmental power that is shared with an interim body that is not elected will necessarily be less than that which is shared with an elected body pursuant to a final solution.

The grant of additional powers to an elected northeast government after a final solution would be an incentive to move towards a final negotiated solution without undue delay. On the other hand, there is no need to view the ISGA proposals in the abstract and critique them from an abstract viewpoint. More properly the LTTE proposals need to be viewed in the context from which they have arisen.

This context is the peace process, and includes the six rounds of negotiations that preceded the formulation of the ISGA proposals. In the third round of negotiations, in Oslo in December 2002, the government and LTTE came to a crucial agreement. They agreed on a common framework within which the solution to the ethnic conflict would be found.

The major breakthrough in obtaining a common framework for negotiating a mutually acceptable solution to the ethnic conflict came in Oslo in December 2002.

At these talks the government and LTTE negotiating teams agreed to a federal solution that would be acceptable to all communities. The statement issued at the close of the third session of peace talks in Oslo contained the following: "Responding to a proposal by the leadership of the LTTE, the parties agreed to explore a solution founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking people based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. The parties acknowledged that the solution has to be acceptable to all communities."

The LTTE's proposals for an Interim Self Governing Authority, therefore, need to be placed within the frame of the Oslo agreement on a federal solution. Every clause of the ISGA document needs to be screened through the frame of federalism, and limits on powers to be granted should be placed accordingly.

By coming up with an ISGA proposal that goes far beyond ensuring the development needs of the people of the north east the LTTE has itself brought up the core issues of a final solution for discussion. This should be welcomed, and not viewed with apprehension.

The international community will have to play an important and effective role. The past experience of talks between the government and the LTTE has been one of disengagement once discussions reach substantive issues.

This is on account of the wide gap between LTTE demands and what governments have hitherto been prepared to offer.

The success of the peace talks would depend largely on international pressure. and the promise of economic assistance. that would keep the government and LTTE at the negotiating table, and in-

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duce them towards compromise.

Transforming threatening situation

The successes at the commencement of the peace process created the impression of a smooth movement forward in the peace process. Compared to the situation of war that existed for twenty years, there is much to be thankful in the present imperfect moment.

In a situation in which progress in the peace process is not forthcoming, it is to be expected that the spotlight will fall on the negative elements. Foremost among these is the issue of targeted killings.

There is condemnation of these killings from all quarters, including those who have been generally sympathetic to the Tamil cause. The media is full of stories about these killings today. But such killings occurred even during the honeymoon period of the ceasefire. During that period, when the government and LTTE referred to each other as partners, protected each other at media conferences and kept alive the promise of progress at every round of peace talks, more than a hundred people were killed.

However, there was a major difference between the killings in the first two years of the ceasefire and the killings today. In the first year of ceasefire, the progress in the peace process was so rapid that it greatly overshadowed the negative elements. Those who rejoiced in the fact that several hundreds of lives were being saved as a result of the ceasefire did not wish to turn the spotlight on the relatively few targeted killings that were still taking place. But today with little to rejoice about in the peace process, and the ceasefire being taken for granted, the targeted killings are no longer being ignored.

The fact that the international spotlight also is now on the killings can be seen in the recent visits by members of the diplomatic corps to the Wanni to meet with the LTTE leadership. All these delegations have brought up the issue of political killings as a very important if not most important issue in relation to the peace process. Such killings violate the very basic notion of democracy and the rule of law. The LTTE may end up paying an unforeseen price for its involvement in these killings in the East and Colombo.

For instance, even if the Sri Lankan government were to grant the LTTE the powers of interim self governance they seek, it is quite possible that the international community would hold these killings against the LTTE. The LTTE's dream that they will stop violating human rights once they get control over an interim self governing authority and the finances at its disposal may never come to pass. The rules and regulations that foreign governments have regarding their use of public funds often prevent them from funding organisations that have violated human rights. The means to achieve political control after a ceasefire has been agreed to have to be legitimate if any party wishes to enjoy the fruits of legitimate power.

Hardline nationalists

The tragedy of the present is that there is a vicious cycle at work. Another powerful group that is taking note of the deterioration in the peace process is one that is not at all sympathetic to the Tamil cause. These are the hardline Sinhalese nationalists within the government.

The JVP component of the govern-

ment has been consistently averse to the peace process and the compromises it has entailed. On the other hand, the larger constituent party in the ruling alliance, the SLFP also has its fair share of Sinhalese nationalists.

The Acting Defence Minister has warned of a military response to the LTTE's ceasefire violations and has spoken of a new international mediator to replace Norway. These words cannot be dismissed as a mere political ploy. There appears to be a serious intent behind them.

The dream of Sinhalese hardliners has been, and remains, a military solution in which the LTTE is eliminated as a military force. The evidence to the contrary that comes after twenty years of war does not daunt them. They see new hope in the break up of the LTTE on regional lines, and the invaluable military intelligence that has accrued to the Sri Lankan military from the breakaway group. In the absence of positive progress in the peace process, those who believe in a military solution can dominate the public space.

One consequence of the strengthening of the forces of hardline Sinhalese nationalism is that the LTTE's own confidence in the viability of the peace process will get less than it is, and they will step up their own aggressive measures which, in turn, feeds into the vicious cycle.

Therefore it is important that the growing numbers of people who belong to this hardline camp should be speedily contained. The past experience in Sri Lanka shows that the period of peace talks was the most psychologically positive one in the country, when a return to war became unimaginable. Restarting the peace process would be the most effective way to contain the growth of militant and hardline Sinhalese and Tamil nationalism.

Unfortunately, the forces of hardline Sinhalese nationalism are on the ascendant within the ranks of the ruling UPFA at this time. The fiery rhetoric of the JVP, which is pitched at a simple one dimensional level, is getting more and more people convinced that a viable peace process with the LTTE may not be possible. The LTTE's own disregard of human rights norms and its refusal to listen even to the international monitors, has contributed to this negative frame of mind. The dominance of the hardline Sinhalese viewpoint within the UPFA would be a complete one if not for the presence within it of President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

President's role

At the present time the hopes of a revival of the peace process are pinned on the President. She is one of the main actors on the Sri Lankan national scene who has an interest in the speedy resumption of peace talks. At the conclusion of her second and final term of office as President of the country, she has a strong interest to leave a legacy of peace and prosperity to the people.

The last thing on the President's mind would be to preside once again over a bloody and costly war, as she did for the first seven years of her presidency.

The President's decision to resign from the leadership of the UPFA has been widely attributed to her desire to free herself from having to be responsible to the JVP for her actions as its leader. By resigning from the leadership of the UPFA, the President has opened up space for her to act without being challenged by the JVP.

On the other hand, the President faces a formidable problem in restarting the peace talks. She has no guaranteed majority support for a peace initiative from within Parliament. Her own party, the SLFP, has less than a third of the seats in Parliament.

While the JVP is one of the two main component parties of the UPFA, the current JVP attitude towards the peace process makes it highly unlikely that they will be the ones to provide support to the President to restart the peace process on terms acceptable to the LTTE. Therefore it is necessary for the President to look elsewhere in Parliament for support.

The UNP would be the obvious choice, as it has shown the greatest commitment to a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict over the past several years. Although the UNP has been the SLFP's traditional rival for over fifty years, key sections within the two parties are very close to each other on the peace process and on the need for a federal type of solution.

Last week the UNP issued a lengthy statement that set out its stand on the peace process. On the one hand, the UNP was constructive when it stated that it would support the government if it decided to start peace talks with the LTTE on the basis of its proposals for an interim self governing authority.

On the other hand, the UNP also made sure it would remind the people of the recent history of the peace process, and thereby indict the government for having created much of the problem it now faces.

While scoring political points may be a necessary part of party politics, what is most needed at this time is a problem solving approach to the peace process. Magnanimity is a quality of being generous that is born of confidence in oneself. This is the time for magnanimity, not for a recounting of grievances with a view to taking political advantage. The UNP can strengthen the hand of the President to take forward the peace process by giving her their committed support to restart peace talks with the LTTE. They should not be afraid of where the political credit for success in the peace process might go.

A comparison of the two periods of governance, by the UNP-led government on the one hand, and the UPFA on the other would reveal that the UNP was more strategic and professional in its approach to peace making with the LTTE. However, there is also no doubt that President Kumaratunga has shown herself over the past decade to be the most effective political campaigner in the country. A government headed by President Kumaratunga is likely to be the one that stands the best chance of persuading the people that a negotiated solution, with all the compromises it entails, is in the country's best interests.

New political situation

The long anticipated cross-over of the Ceylon Workers Congress to the government has finally taken place.

CWC leader Arumugam Thondaman has pledged his party's unconditional support to the government. While he has said he will support the government to recommence peace talks with the LTTE, his party's offer extends to other matters as well, as it is an unconditional offer of support.

This has opened up new opportunities and space for change. The addition of the CWC's eight seats in Parliament will be a boon to the government. It will provide the UPFA with a guaranteed majority in Parliament for the first time since the general elections held five months ago. The question is whether the government will use its newly found majority, to serve primarily its partisan interests or the common good. The partisan interest of the government is exemplified by its determination to change the present constitution.

The need to change the constitution is undeniable. The present constitution has many flaws in it. These include the limitations on the power of the Supreme Court. Legislation can only be challenged

before they are enacted as law, and not after. This is a great weakness in the present constitution. The present constitution also vests too much power in the central government and the executive presidency, and blocks the devolution of power to the regions. Certainly, these are matters of common national interest. But the manner in which the UPFA has been seeking constitutional change has been partisan in nature. Its primary motive in changing the constitution has been to give President Chandrika Kumaratunga a new lease of political life. There is no common agreement in the country regarding constitutional change for her sake. On the other hand, there is common agreement in the country that the ethnic conflict should be resolved without any more violence. Virtually the entire political spectrum, with the possible exception of the JVP and JHU, are agreed that the Norwegian-facilitated peace process should move forward in this regard. The entry of the CWC into the government provides a valuable opportunity to break the deadlock in the peace process for the common good.

President Kumaratunga has announced that she will first seek a consensus with all other political parties prior to recommencing the peace talks. In theory this is a desirable state of affairs. However, in the context of Sri Lankan politics, such an effort at consensus building is likely to cause delay. Already five months have passed since the election of the new government. The peace process has been stalled for nearly eighteen months. Breakthroughs that come after long periods of deadlock best take place in the immediate aftermath of an important new happening, when there is a psychological ascendancy.

Tortuous task

If past experience is any guide the effort to obtain a consensus with the opposition is likely to be a tortuous task. The opposition parties are likely to disagree on various details. Not only is there likely to be delay, the entire exercise is likely to end in failure. The alternative is for the President to show dynamic leadership and to start peace talks with the LTTE at this time when she has the psychological ascendancy that her new alliance with the CWC brings with it.

The CWC represents the hill country Tamil people who have a keen interest in supporting the peace process. It can be expected that they will give their total commitment to peace talks with the LTTE.

A problem for the President might be that resuming peace talks with the LTTE would mean accepting the LTTE's precondition for such talks. This is the LTTE's insistence that the talks should be solely on the ISGA proposals it has put forward. While the President and her coalition allies have opposed this LTTE position in the past, the President needs to reconsider her own position.

Most people are not conversant about the LTTE's ISGA proposals one way or the other. The vast majority of people are more concerned about the possibility of a breakdown in the ceasefire than about the agenda of the peace talks.

In this context, the President would do well to look at the example provided by former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and learn from the positive and negative aspects of his actions. The former Prime Minister lifted the ban on the LTTE and signed the Ceasefire Agreement without obtaining a consensus with the other political parties. Most of the opposition parties had serious reservations about what he was doing.

But the former Prime Minister's actions put a stop to the war, and the people rejoiced in the new found peace. Therefore the opposition parties were limited in their ability to oppose them. The mistake the former Prime Minister made came later in the peace process. He failed to see the need to build a wider political and civil consensus after the peace process got under way.

If the lesson of the past is to be learnt, it is that the President should use the advantages of the present moment to restart the peace process without delay. It is in the government's interests to start the peace process as soon as possible before new problems come to distract their attention, as they surely will. This would give a forward momentum to the government, which has been lacking ever since they came to power. It would also allay the people's anxiety about a drift back to war. A resumption of peace talks would also permit the international donor community to lift their barriers to the flow of economic aid to the country.

Three temptations

The present moment, like the moments that have been and are yet to come, is one that has positive and negative potential. On the one hand, the ability of the international monitors to persuade the Sri Lanka Army and the LTTE to meet with each other in the east to discuss security issues is a breakthrough.

For over three months the LTTE had suspended such meetings and this had led to a potentially dangerous situation. On the other hand, the LTTE has started refusing to permit the international monitors to inspect some of their activities. In this climate fraught with potential it would be very unfortunate if the government is not able to make use of the opportunity that the CWC crossover has brought with it to take the peace process in a positive direction.

However, there are three temptations that President Kumaratunga will have to overcome on her and her government's party if they are to be able to truly make use of this opportunity that has unfolded. The first is to insist that the LTTE should give up their condition that the ISGA should be the sole agenda item at the talks. But the track record of the LTTE is that it is very difficult to make it budge once it takes a position. Besides at this time the LTTE may have a vested interest in delaying the resumption of peace talks, as they would wish to regain physical control over the eastern territories they have lost due to the split in their ranks. Therefore, the initiative to resume peace talks will necessarily have to come from the government, as it will not come from the LTTE.

The second temptation that the President will have to overcome is to utilise her new parliamentary majority to change the constitution to benefit herself. Such a course of action, which would be opposed by the opposition parties, would set in motion a train of events that could be very divisive to the country. It would also split the people and civil society into those who support the constitutional change and those who oppose it. The peace process will no longer be the focus. Instead partisan politics will take centre stage, and the efforts to resolve the ethnic conflict will either be put on the back burner or will be half hearted.

The third temptation would be to make sure that there is a political consensus behind her approach to the LTTE. The President would wish to make sure that she has the required parliamentary support for creating new institutions for the north east as a result of the peace talks. But she is unlikely to receive such a guarantee of support from the opposition. What is more likely is that the opposition, and in particular the UNP, will not oppose her actions to promote the peace process.

The President needs to act with the confidence that most of the people of Sri Lanka will agree with her when she restarts the peace process for the common good and that the opposition parties will not oppose what the people want. ❑

Anti-Conversion Bill: Repercussions

L. P. C. Mendis

If there is a perfect illustration of the famous saying 'cutting the nose to spite the face', it is 'The Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion Bill'. For convenience or by design, this bill is being correctly referred to as the Anti-Conversion Bill despite protestations that it prohibits only forcible conversions. Yet, an analysis of its provisions shows that it will effectively stop all conversions, forcible or voluntary.

Fundamental Rights

Fundamental Rights are enshrined in Chapter III of the constitution and what is righteously being focused in the bill is sections 10 and 14(i) thereof. What is disturbing is the apparent duplicity sought to be cleverly disguised in the Preamble which, while accepting the assurance given in section 10 of an individual's entitlement to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including the freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice, seeks to negate those very freedoms by throttling or hand-cuffing both the proselyte and the proselytiser by the requirement to inform the Divisional Secretary of the conversion.

Section 3 (b) of the bill even extends the responsibility further to sponsors (god-parents, at least 3 in number) involved in Christian baptisms and perhaps all participants in such a ceremony who themselves have to make such intimations.

Section 4 prescribes the penalty of 5 years and a fine of Rs. 150,000 for violation of section 2 and further provides for a 7-year term and fine of Rs. 500,000 for contravention in respect of a minor, a woman or a person referred to in schedule 1.

Interestingly, schedule 1 makes the sky the limit in that while specifying 10 categories, including the toughest guys in society such as prison inmates, armed forces and the police whom no one can possibly force into conversion, the 11th position is left to the whims and fancies of the Minister in charge of the subject to prescribe other categories by regulation. Indeed, it is a moot point whether the Minister is empowered by law to virtually amend the provisions of the substantive law by regulations framed by him. A future extremist Minister can, metaphorically speaking, set fire to the country! Indeed, the preamble to the bill also assures (with tongue in cheek) the rationale to be 'the need to protect and promote religious harmony among all religions, historically enjoyed by the people of Sri Lanka'.

The Supreme Court's determination has been that Clauses 3 and 4 need a two-third majority and referendum. Constitutionally, under Article 9, the State has the responsibility to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana, while assuring all religions the rights granted under Articles 10 and 14(i). The State has inevitably to maintain the balance in a transparent and equitable manner so as to win the confidence and trust of its subjects.

Forcible conversion

The rationale of the bill revolves around section 2 thereof which provides that: "No person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise, any person from one religion to another by the use of force or by allurement or by any fraudulent means nor shall any person aid or abet any such conversion." It is necessary, therefore, to dissect this provision carefully to see whether the objective of the proposed legislation would be achieved or whether it would bring the country to the brink of another disaster which it can ill-afford after 20 years of internal conflict in another area.

In as much as it is suspected that certain converts are subject to gratification or coercion, it could also happen that through gratification or coercion, false evidence could possibly be harnessed through malice. The word 'otherwise' in the phrase 'directly or otherwise', is a broad term embracing a host of possibilities, including preaching and prayer which could be capable of being interpreted to mean the exercise of indirect force through word of mouth, particularly in discussing comparative religion, if a person changes his religion being satisfied that his conscience has been duly touched through his supplications and experience or convinced of positive results facilitated by the interventionist and that his new-found belief or faith is more meaningful than his efforts made through his own religion or faith.

On the other hand, there are numerous persons suffering from serious ailments, who in desperation go from temple to churches to kovils, mosques or charismatic movements in order to obtain relief through vows and prayer, whether such methods are acceptable to others or not. If they obtain some relief and are convinced of the source of relief, they tend to stick to such belief. It is so in this land of *kattadiyas,* pseudo exorcists and the like. That is the individual's choice and very much as in the case of morals, is incapable of being legislated for. Nevertheless, the person who administered the prayers or rituals would be answerable and subject to heavy penalty after going through torturous court procedure.

Allurement

The world 'allurement' according to the Oxford dictionary means attractiveness, personal charm, fascination. Allurement is an offence under Section 2 of the Bill and for the purpose of the Bill its meaning has been extended in Section 8 to mean - any gift or gratification whether in cash or kind; grant of any material benefit, whether monetary or otherwise; grant of employment or grant of promotion in employment. It would indeed be inappropriate and unethical for an enactment to import meanings and to give them legal effect as in the instant case.

There are numerous instances where lawyers have argued their cases in terms of the meaning given in the Oxford dictionary. The framers of this legislation in their anxiety to frustrate activities of Christians in charity or social projects, would deprive poor recipients of food parcels, dry rations, clothing, wheel chairs, artificial limbs and other assistance in the future for woe be unto the person who does it, unless of course, he wants to emulate Christ in crucifixion. And what of the poor children who through the ages have looked forward to Christmas treats, Christmas trees and danas throughout the year on occasion or regular assistance? A voluntary conversion can easily be construed as a conversion by force in terms of the wide terminology used 'directly or otherwise'.

The sponsors of this legislation have been taking great pains to show that it is not directed at established churches but

once legislation is in place one is not distinguishable from the other. The law has to be administered uniformly. It is said that over the years successive fiscal policies have enabled the rich to become richer and the poor to become poorer. There is no doubt that by this measure, the poor will be made still poorer.

Hitherto, the responsibility of the State to uplift the poor has been aided and supplemented by projects undertaken by religious communities and institutions to which they will invariably cry halt. If there are unethical conversions taking place, it has to be unequivocally condemned and alternative measures put in place for poverty alleviation by the State and Institutions concerned about such positions.

Christian schools

What of Christian schools which are much sought after by Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims? It is rumoured that certain parents resort to fake baptisms of children in order to seek admission to reputed Christian schools which are comparatively liberal in having a mix and not being exclusive. The particular priest is none the wiser about the genuineness or otherwise of intentions. Principals and the managements of Christian schools should best be on their guard and perforce revise their admission policy. They would be very vulnerable in the context of preference being given to Christians in admissions. Varied ruses employed by parents and guardians can well be blamed on them within the meaning of 'allurement'.

Conversions and Buddhists

Section 8 says "convert" means "to make one person to renounce one religion and adopt another religion". It would be correct to say that Buddhism has been widely acknowledged as a Philosophy and a Way of Life. A Buddhist may, therefore, not come within the jurisdiction of this Bill and anybody instrumental in converting a person to it, may not have to suffer the consequences. If, however, Buddhism can be brought within the meaning of "religion", it will certainly boomerang. If not, the legislation may turn out to be a damp squib establishing in its wake a happy hunting ground for lawyers. Buddhism has survived for more than 2500 years notwithstanding colonial efforts to undermine it. What logical assumption is there that it is now in imminent danger despite constitutional safeguard and the alertness of its massive following?

Its continued survival and enrichment is surely in the hands of the Buddhist hierarchy and the monks taking advantage of the constitutional safeguards to strengthen the ties between temple and village as in the past - a concept which is now being vigorously pursued by the President - and inculcating the hallowed concepts of maithriya and compassion which the Buddha took great pains to preach.

On the other hand Christian priests and pastors need to keep in mind the teachings of Jesus Christ who himself made Love and Compassion his theme and advised his disciples to shake off the dust of their feet and leave if they are not acceptable (no coercion or allurement). The father of Free Education, Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara, was a distinguished Richmondite and many other distinguished Sri Lankans, including three Prime Ministers, can claim ties to reputed Christian schools. There had never been any allegations of coercion or allurement. On the contrary, a few Christian politicians and others had embraced Buddhism!

- Courtesy: The Island, 1 Sept 2004

Critical or Constructive Engagement? Sri Lankan Civil Society at the Crossroads of Politics and Principle

(Review of "The Sri Lankan Peace Process at Crossroads: Lessons Opportunities and Ideas for Principled Negotiations and Conflict Transformation," by Tyrol Ferdinands, Kumar Rupesinghe, Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Jayadeva Uyangoda, and Norbert Ropers.)

Alan Keenan

Few would dispute that the roughly two year long peace process between the UNP-led government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers was an almost entirely pragmatic affair, with little concern for principles of democracy, human rights, multicultural understanding, or even those, like collective autonomy or federalism, that are generally seen to be at the heart of any solution to Sri Lanka's war. Instead, as the months passed, as six rounds of direct talks came and went, as disputes over the reconstruction and normalization of the north and east grew more bitter, and as the LTTE's political assassinations and forced recruitment of children continued unchecked, it became increasingly clear that none of the parties - not the government, not the Tigers, and not the Norwegians, the SLMM, or the "international community" at large - had a very serious commitment to even the most basic of democratic and human rights. At least not serious enough to place any limits on the Tigers' quest for total domination of Tamil society, not serious enough to get in the way of the kind of peace and quiet necessary to the UNP's neo-liberal economic plans for "regaining Sri Lanka," and not serious enough to complicate Norwegian (and Japanese, and European) visions of a politically insulated and smoothly run peace process.

It is thus in many respects refreshing to see a document emerge from within Sri Lankan civil society that calls for rethinking the peace process along the lines of clearly thought through principles, ranging from "inclusivity," "transparency," and "mutual gain," to "international human rights and humanitarian rights standards" [iii]. A fascinating document written by five of Colombo's most prominent advocates of a negotiated settlement to Sri Lanka's civil war - Tyrol Ferdinands, Kumar Rupesinghe, Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Jayadeva Uyangoda, and Norbert Ropers – ***"The Sri Lankan Peace Process at Crossroads: Lessons, Opportunities, and Ideas for Principled Negotiations and Conflict Transformation"*** offers a sustained analysis of the insufficiently principled nature of the peace process to date. They argue that the first two years of the LTTE-Sri Lankan dialogue and negotiations were weakened by "the lack of a clear, transparent and common strategic framework which could have guided and structured the negotiations as well as helped to mobilise public support for the peace process. Instead, all principal stakeholders had their particular strategies on how to maximise power and influence through their attitude towards the peace process.... The net effect was a pragmatic and ad hoc muddling through of the negotiation process, which made it difficult to address the crucial contentious issues and move towards inclusivity." [i]

The answer proposed by the *"Crossroads"* authors is to "develop a comprehensive and common strategic framework of multiple peace negotiations and peace building" [iii, emphasis added]. Of central importance here would be to assure that all important "stakeholders" become co-owners of the peace process, that a memorandum of understanding is signed that incorporates a "holistic" conception of human rights, and that women and the issues central to their experience of conflict are given greater prominence. The authors also hold that an explicit set of principles must be established for the conduct and outcome of negotiations. These would be designed to insure: 1) that the central conflict issues are addressed directly, 2) that negotiations aim at building greater trust between the parties, in part so as to 3) identify "the enlightened and common interests of the parties" and "overcome bargaining from adversarial positions." This would allow for agreements 4) to be framed towards "mutual gain" and 5) based on "jointly accepted principles (e.g., principles of fairness, justice, equality, democracy, good governance and pluralism.)." Clearly, the adoption of such a common framework of principles would revolutionize the Sri Lankan peace process. Were such a revolution to occur, one would have reason to hope that a permanent solution to the war and its ethnicized divisions wouldn't be far down the road.

But what exactly does "principle" mean - and do - for the five authors of the *"Crossroads"* document? How do their chosen set of principles relate to and interact with the complex relationships of power, influence, and control that structure the Sri Lankan political universe? And who are the best carriers, or advocates, of those principles necessary to peace, and how best can they bring these principles into practice? Following the tenets of an increasingly prominent model of conflict transformation, the authors of *"Crossroads"* seem to believe that a particular kind of evenhanded, reciprocal, transparent, and inclusive process of negotiations and public consultations holds out the best possibility of introducing those principles needed to transform the attitudes and behavior of the contending parties and the Sri Lankan state and politics. But how well does their proposed framework of principles actually hold together in the specific context of Sri Lanka's political conflicts? And, of crucial importance, what are the principles implicit in the approach to conflict and peace embodied in the document itself? Are they in fact fully consistent with - or the best route towards - the authors' professed commitment to "fairness, justice, equality, democracy, good governance, and pluralism"?

The authors are clear in their dissatisfaction with the unprincipled nature of the negotiations and peace process to date. Yet they seem strangely unconcerned with explaining its causes. In particular, there is a striking absence of political or strategic analysis of the major parties to the negotiations - the LTTE, the government and military, and the foreign powers and institutions involved in supporting and funding the process. There is virtually no analysis of what their motivations might be, or of what political projects and forces might be shaping their negotiation (non-)positions. Yet, without any serious analysis of who the major parties are and what their histories tell us about their likely agendas and interests, the Crossroads text leaves it unclear why its favoured principles haven't been respected during the peace process so far, nor what obstacles will obstruct their implementation in the fu-

ture. Instead, the text seems to take for granted that the parties to the process are already - if perhaps unconsciously - motivated by relatively benign intentions, which can be transformed into fully developed principles of reciprocity, justice, and the common good with the provision of the right technical means: money, training in negotiations, knowledge and acceptance of new paradigms/frameworks, more carefully structured negotiations, etc.

Yet it is hard not to think that the transformations that would be necessary for the LTTE and the SLG to adopt an "inclusive, transparent, and common strategic framework" would be pretty much what would be necessary to reaching a final settlement. In other words, what is presented as the means to the end is in many ways the end itself: a genuine willingness by both major parties to transform their institutions and practices in democratic ways, such that violence, hierarchy, and oppression no longer constitute their central means of maintaining power vis-à-vis each other and their "citizens." Appeals to principle, rationality, and technical expertise can only get you so far without also developing the political leverage necessary to move the parties towards full self-consciousness of their own rational self-interest.

One can see both the strengths and the significant limitations of the *"Crossroads"* approach most clearly in the authors' treatment of human rights issues. To their great credit, they argue that "movement in the peace process that does not take human rights questions into account will risk the continued loss of public support and legitimacy for the peace process. This will further result in a continued deterioration in the human rights situation on the ground. Moreover, further rhetorical commitment and gestures alone will not be enough; public cynicism has been fed by the failure to make better use of the good office of Ian Martin (designated as Human Rights Advisor by the two parties)" [25]. In terms of specific recommendations, the document states clearly that a "principled" approach to the process of negotiation would have to include an MoU on Human Rights that would "be valid throughout the negotiating process" and that could "subsequently be incorporated into agreements, both interim and final" reached between the parties. "The MoU should provide for effective monitoring of human rights with international assistance" [11].

Nonetheless, their commitment to a particular vision of evenhandedness and to a "mutual gains" approach to negotiations actually undermines much of the force of their principled defense of human rights. We can see this in three particular ways. First, their desire to sell the idea of human rights as a "win-win" item on the negotiation agenda - not just over the long term, but right now - leads them to be less than straightforward about the nature and sources of current threats to human rights. Thus, the authors write very evenhandedly that "the first phase of negotiations were marked by human rights violations, allegations and counter-allegations of such violations from all sides, and an apparent inability or unwillingness to integrate a viable human rights framework into the negotiations process" [10]. And when mentioning the kinds of ceasefire violations, they use agent-less statements like "under-age recruitment continues" [10], and "human rights abuses have continued to take place" [4], never directly connecting the LTTE with specific violations, even as they recognize elsewhere that it is the LTTE that has been accused of the vast majority of violations. In the document's list of specific recommendations for the various parties, the LTTE is asked to make explicit "its commitment ... to establish a representative and pluralist democratic system in the North-East, and elaborate on the mechanisms for guaranteeing human rights and the rule-of-law." How different it would have been to read a call for the LTTE to cease assassinating its political opponents, to cease forcible recruitment of children, and to open its prisons to international inspection.

Second, the document advocates a "holistic" understanding of human rights, one that "will integrate the protection of civil and political rights with the provision of resources and facilities for the enjoyment of economic and social rights" [25]. This helps explain the apparent equivalence the document draws between "the continued recruitment of children, ... extortion and political assassinations, on the one hand, and ... the right of return of IDP's and refugees and the HSZ's [the Army's high security zones in Jaffna], on the other" [25]. It is certainly important to recognize the indivisibility of all rights and to draw out the connections between the violation of classically liberal rights of privacy, property, due process, and bodily integrity and the denial of social and economic equality and well-being. However it is not at all obvious that the particular understanding of "holism" recommended is in fact the wisest one in the present Sri Lankan context. Undoubtedly immediate steps need to be taken on a range of human rights issues, including child recruitment, political assassinations, and the situation of IDPs. However, there is a distinction between the immediate steps needed to respect rights, and the outcomes that one may expect from those steps. To expect tangible outcomes in the short term on all these issues is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of the challenges. Immediate steps on political assassinations and forced recruitment of children will bring tangible results in the short term, and it would be pernicious to delay actions on these issues until tangible results can also be achieved on issues such as the continued displacement of people from their lands and homes. The first set of problems could be solved immediately, with a simple series of order from the LTTE leadership, while the other issue is clearly one that will require careful negotiation between the parties and confidence building guarantees all round. Lumping the different issues together threatens to obscure the particular politics characteristic of the failure to respect each mode of rights - the politics of militarist domination and internal terror characteristic of the LTTE, and the politics of ethnic majoritarianism, class inequality, and structural "racism" on the part of the Sri Lankan state. Demanding that all rights be addressed at once, in a misguided quest for "mutual gains" and a theoretically flawed conception of holism, threatens to hold assurances of basic rights to life and liberty hostage to the difficulty of making the complex decisions necessary to honouring humanitarian rights, not to mention the even more complex structural and political changes necessary to respecting social and economic rights.

Finally, their advocacy of a holistic approach is clearly motivated at least in part by a desire not to embarrass the LTTE. "Human rights are better dealt with in a way that is not seen as threatening by the LTTE," they write. "Neither can it be done in a way that projects one party as having the monopoly of virtue on the issue" [25]. They codify this rhetorical preference in the form of a principle when they argue for the value of "moving beyond" the standard mode of human rights mode of "naming and shaming" and towards "constructive engagement" (primarily with the LTTE) instead [11]. Going beyond naming and shaming - which the authors are right to suggest is a limited and limiting rhetorical posture - would seem to make sense only if the parties being called on to change are at least minimally open to hearing criticism

and changing their behaviour for reasons other than the fear of public criticism and the shame it brings. Unfortunately, despite the hopes of many in the initial months of the ceasefire, the LTTE has yet to make any changes in its behaviour with regard to basic rights of life and liberty and property that would suggest any such space exists. What evidence is there that the systematic refusal of the major players - the GoSL, the SLMM, the Norwegians, and all governments but the United States - to publicly name and shame the LTTE for its violations has been at all "constructive"?

Many clearly share the fears of the authors of the *"Crossroads"* document that publicly calling the LTTE to account for its continuing use of terror and active destruction of democratic space for Tamils would let the Sri Lankan state off the hook and play into the hands of Sinhala nationalism. The experience of the last two and a half years suggests the opposite is the case, as the *"Crossroads"* author seem to recognize elsewhere: by not naming the LTTE, one fuels a vicious circle whereby the LTTE's violence encourages many Sinhalese to refuse responsibility for past violations and structural injustices, thus further entrenching the distrust of many, if not most, Tamils and with it their reluctance to criticise Tiger abuses. Not naming the LTTE as the source of the most troubling abuses during the time of the ceasefire makes it harder to name the specific forms of institutionalized injustice - with their potential, of course, to be expressed in specific acts of repression and violence - that are characteristic of the Sri Lankan state. It is here that the document's lack of political analysis and failure to analyse the specific modes of power characteristic of the LTTE and of the Sri Lankan state has particularly regrettable effects.

We can see a similar set of problems in the *"Crossroads"* approach to "civil society." On the one hand, the document argues strongly that actors and organizations within civil society must play - and be invited to play - a much larger and more vigorous role in support of a negotiated settlement. "Public participation should underpin the negotiations process," they state. "All parties should work on the premise that the general public is a stakeholder to the peace process. This requires effective mobilisation of people for a broad-based peace movement" [37]. Who exactly is doing the mobilizing, however, is left unclear. Is civil society mobilizing itself or being mobilized for the needs of the negotiating process and partners? We are told that "a protracted negotiation process must be situated in an environment of sustained public support and public interest. This environment can be created through coordinated mechanisms for information-sharing and awareness-raising, and coordinated strategies for social mobilisation and mass communication" [11]. Thus "well-designed programmes need to be developed to involve trade unions, women's organizations, the business community, religious organisations, professional organisations and other numerous entities that compose civil society" [37]. Rather than being called on to mobilize itself in pursuit of its own democratic pluralist vision of a more just and equitable post-war Sri Lanka, civil society is primarily imagined as a useful adjunct to a professionalized and technicized conflict transformation process. It is more often presented as an object, rather than a subject, of mobilization - as a resource that the negotiating parties and their sponsors might better exploit through a more effective "communications strategy" and efforts at "mobilization."

Instead of adopting and promoting the perspective of a politically active and demanding civil society, with its own independent agenda of democracy and anti-militarism, "The Sri Lankan Peace Process at Crossroads" is written from a basic identification with the position (and, by implication, with the "enlightened" interests) of the negotiating parties. Or, perhaps more accurately, the text is generally written as if from the position of an ideal mediator, one whose central concern is with understanding the point of view of the negotiating parties so as to find the potential common ground between them. While this allows the authors to make a range of important suggestions for improving the negotiations process, it comes at a high price. The authors' identification with the position of hypothetical mediator, and their adoption of its easy-going "mutual gains" approach, obscures the necessity of another very different role that can only be played by the forces of democratic civil society. It also helps explain the document's disturbing claim that human rights issues must not be articulated in ways that challenge the power of the LTTE.

Ultimately, then, the authors of *"The Sri Lankan Peace Process at Crossroads"* stake their hopes on a conflict transformation paradigm of social change rather than on the alternative framework of democratic politics. Political struggles, even democratic and inclusive struggles, must to some degree operate according to a logic of contradiction and opposition: they draw lines between good and bad, between "us" (democrats) and "them" (militarists, feudalists, fundamentalists, exploiters). Adherents of conflict transformation/resolution approaches avoid drawing such lines. When they do challenge the contending parties, it is done in the name of reason ("mutual gains"), technique ("communication strategies"), and principles that are abstracted from political power and leverage. While the two paradigms could, in principle, be made to complement each other, they are likely to remain in tension for the foreseeable future. The question now is whether those same political actors - international donors and their allies in Sri Lanka's professional civil society organizations - who have so far supported the peace process as defined and controlled by the two most powerful stakeholders can learn also to support those local forces that could challenge those same stakeholders in genuinely democratic ways. The fact that donor support for local human rights activities has fallen dramatically since the ceasefire is not a hopeful sign in this regard. But the first step should be for high profile and professionalized civil society groups at least to recognize publicly the urgent need to develop forms of truly critical - and thus truly constructive - engagement "from below." These would be forms of engagement that offer general support for negotiations and the peace process, but from a position outside the seminar and conference rooms and with enough independent political leverage to have a chance of holding the Tigers and the Sri Lankan state to at least some of the higher principles that *"Crossroads"* so exhaustively outlines.

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[1] The full text is available at www.cpalanka.org/research_papers/Sri_Lankan_Peace_Process.pdf.

[2] The release of recruited children and halting additional recruitment is itself an immediate result – however, child recruitment does lead to long term problems and those long term problems may take time to address.

[3] refer to HRC report from the east about things being worse now than before ceasefire

[4] The document is particularly strong on analyzing the so-called "spoiler" dynamics, arguing that "the effect of excluding key stakeholders has tempted them to explore and strengthen their power to veto even positive outcomes" [7]. Also of note is the document's very useful analysis of the complex and at times politically problematic role of international actors, its call to Norway to consider handing over leadership of the SLMM to another country, and its critique of the failure of the ceasefire agreement to leave any space for gradual and sustained de-militarization.

(Courtesy of: 'lines', May 2004 - http://www.lines-magazine.org/Links/about.htm)

PEOPLE & POLITICS

● **Mystery of the missing plaque**

President Chandrika Kumaratunga who was to be the chief guest at the foundation stone laying ceremony on 2 September for a new SLFP headquarters on State land acquired on a long-term leasing arrangement with the Urban Development Authority, missed the ceremony.

On a personal visit to the UK and Ireland she had informed organisers of her inability to return on time for the scheduled ceremony at Battaramulla, a few miles from the capital. According to party sources said that a postponement of the ceremony had been suggested, but after deliberations it was found that it was too late to postpone the event as invitations had already gone out to many.

In the absence of the President party seniors decided to request Premier Mahinda Rajapakse to lay the foundation stone. The ceremony was held and Premier Rajapakse unveiled the plaque but to his surprise found that his name was not on it. It read that the foundation stone was laid by President Kumaratunga. The plaque also carried the names of the party's Treasurer Mangala Samaraweera and General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena. The plaque also carried the names and pictures of former prime ministers, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (the founding leader of the SLFP) and Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

However, two days after the laying of the foundation stone, the bronze plaque has gone missing and the mystery surrounding its disappearance continues.

The two-storey building on 240 perches of land will house a range of facilities including an auditorium running into two levels and a VIP lobby. It will cost approximately Rs. 200 million. The foundation laying ceremony was to mark the party's 53rd anniversary.

● **India's new High Commissioner**

India's new High Commissioner in Colombo, Mrs. Nirupama Rao, was born on 6 December 1950. After obtaining a Master's Degree in English Literature from Marathwada University in Maharashtra, she joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1973.

During the period January 1976 - October 1983, her assignments included postings at the Indian Missions in Vienna and in Colombo (where she was First Secretary (Agreement) from 1981 to 1983), and as Desk Officer in the Southern Africa and Nepal Desks at the Ministry of External Affairs. From 1984 to 1992, Mrs. Rao worked in the East Asia Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, with special focus on India-China relations. She thereafter was a Fellow at the Centre for International Affairs (now called the Weatherhead Center) at Harvard University where she specialized on Asia-Pacific Security.

From October 1993 to October 1995, Mrs. Rao was Minister for Press Affairs at the Indian Embassy in Washington. Thereafter until May 1998 she was India's Ambassador to Peru. This was followed by a stint as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Moscow between June 1998 and August 1999. Thereafter until September 2000, Mrs. Rao was Distinguished International Executive in Residence at the University of Maryland, USA. In December 2000, she was assigned as Head of Division in the External Affairs Ministry in charge of Multilateral Economic Relations..

From June 2001 to October 2002, she was Joint Secretary (External Publicity) and Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, the first woman officer to hold this post in the Ministry. In October 2002, she was assigned as Additional Secretary in the Human Resources Division of the Ministry.

She took concurrent charge of the Office of Foreign Service Inspector in February 2004. Mrs. Rao is married to Sudhakar Rao, a senior Civil Servant and member of the Indian Administrative Service. The couple have two sons, aged 26 and 16.

● **Ceasefire Agreement challenged**

The question is whether, the LTTE's Supremo Velupillai Pirapakaran will present himself in court as directed by Sri Lanka' Appeal Court. Very unlikely is the answer. The LTTE has set up its own 'Courts' in the areas under its control in the Northeast, and some say that he does not recognise and accept the jurisdiction of Sri Lanka's courts.

The Tamil Tiger leader has been asked to appear in court over petitions questioning the validity of the Ceasefire Agreement signed by him and former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe in February 2002.

Sri Lanka's Appeal Court on 3 September issued summons on Mr. Pirapakaran to appear in court on October 1 in connection with applications seeking a declaration from the Appeal Court annulling the Ceasefire Agreement on the grounds of legal invalidity. The Court also ordered that notices be issued on the Attorney General and also the Cabinet of Ministers as the petitioners have sought to add the present Cabinet as respondents.

Three political parties had filed action claiming that former Prime Minister Wickremesinghe had no authority to enter into the agreement with the LTTE as it was the country's President who had the sole authority to sign such agreement. The petitioners are the JVP or People's Liberation Front, the JHU or National Heritage Party and the Sinhalese National Front.

Since Prabhakaran's residential address was not known the court ordered the summons to be forwarded to him through the main opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe.

● **Solheim Returns**

The Norwegian special peace envoy Eric Solheim will arrive in Sri Lanka on September 13 on a five day visit. Though a constant target of some who even indulge in assassination of his character by dredging out in public his private life, he must be the most frequent diplomatic visitor to Sri Lanka.

It is reported that the purpose of his visit this time is to review the progress, if any, that has been reached by the Government and the LTTE and to bridge the gap that exists between the parties that has so far made the resuming peace talks impossible.

A spokeswoman to the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo has said that Solheim is scheduled to have detailed discussions with the Government leaders, including President Kumaratunga in Colombo and LTTE leaders in northern Kilinochchi during his stay in the country. She added that Solheim is also scheduled to meet the representatives of the donor community and also the civil society representatives during his visit. Solheim will be returning to Sri Lanka this time after having had dis-

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cussions with the LTTE Chief Negotiator Anton Balasingham in London.

● **Luxury is the name of the game**

The masses in Sri Lanka are complaining about the crushing cost of living that has sky-rocketed in recent months. There is not one single item among essential commodities that has not risen in price, many of them beyond the reach of the average man or woman.

But there appears to be a bottomless well from which those who have taken to politics to serve the masses are able to find the money for the perks they claim. A Cabinet Minister wants the Government to allocate Rs. 300 million to import luxury vehicles for 68 new members of Parliament. While on all other matters, the peoples' representatives belonging to the governing party on one side and the opposition parties on the other side are at each others throats, there appears to be absolute unanimity on the issue of duty free luxury cars for MPs.

The move comes after the MPs concerned, both from the Government and the Opposition, objected to importing low cost vehicles under the existing credit line from India. They have also not been able to pick on vehicles of their choice from a fleet seized by the Customs and lying in the Colombo Port.

According to a report in The Sunday Times, 68 MPs from the UPFA, UNP, JHU, TNA, SLMC and the CWC are entitled to import vehicles. Parliamentary Affairs Ministry Secretary, R. Kuruppu confirmed that the cabinet paper would be submitted to import vehicles from Japan. The majority of the members are insisting that they be allowed to import vehicles from Japan as the vehicles imported from India had less market value compared to the Japanese vehicles.

"Most of the MPs are known to sell their vehicles. That is one of the reasons why they are insisting on Japanese vehicles," a minister reportedly said. The demand from the MPs to import Japanese vehicles comes in the wake of comments made by Finance Minister Sarath Amunugama that in the coming weeks they would have to remove subsidies on a variety of consumer items including sugar, chillies, onions and potatoes.

● **Some are more equal**

Some Members of Parliament belonging to the Tamil Nationalist Alliance (TNA) are going about with body guards and protection provided of Sri Lankan Army's Special Task Force. There are also some other tensions in the TNA ranks.

One of them is said to be Mr Joseph Pararajasingham who contested the last general election from Batticaloa and lost, but was subsequently nominated to Parliament as a National List MP. S. Jayanandamoorthy, another TNA MP, who is reported to have been a classmate of LTTE's former eastern commander Karuna is reported in the media as saying that there were many of his other colleagues including himself who were more deserving of such protection but had not been provided with. Even among TAN Mos, it appears that some more equal than others.

● **Crossing the Seven Seas**

Aug 21 - A 34-year-old Indian mother of one has fulfilled her dream to swim seven seas after crossing the Palk Strait dividing India and Sri Lanka in a marathon 14-hour feat.

Bula Chowdhury, who has crossed six other major straits and channels including the English Channel, swam the 17-nautical-mile stretch of choppy seas between Talaimannar in north Sri Lanka and Dhanushkodi, close to the temple town of Rameswaram on the southern tip of India. She touched Indian shores early morning on Friday, 20 August.

"My dream to conquer seven seas has been realised. This one was the hardest, toughest crossing since my first long-distance feat across the English Channel in 1989," Chowdhury told reporters in Madras, South India.. Chowdhury said she was now "feeling at the top of the world" and was perhaps the happiest person in the world.

Chowdhury, who no doubt would go into the Guinness Book of World Records to have her multiple feats recognised, is the first woman to cross the English Channel twice in 1989 and 1999, conquered the Strait of Gibraltar in 2000, Tyrrhenian Sea in 2001, International Toroneus Gulf Crossing at Greece in 2002, Catalina Channel in California 2002 and the Cook Strait in New Zealand in 2003.

Accompanying the gritty swimmer were boats carrying two international observers, one from Sri Lanka and the other from India, a nutritionist and her 10-year-old son and her husband, who is also her coach and navigator on long-distance missions.

"I had watched Bula closely during the entire 14 hours of swimming and I am happy to say she complied with all the rules and regulations during her strenuous feat," said Sri Lankan observer J.S. Somachandra, from the swimming world's governing body.

"It was a breathtaking effort on her part," he said.

Nursing her right hand that suffered tissue stiffening due to excessive strain from negotiating the strong current in the rough sea, Chowdhury said: "I was hoping crossing the Palk Strait would be the easiest of my sea experiences. But things went wrong right from the beginning. The sea was rough and I had to swim against strong currents. Even when I was within a couple of hours of accomplishing the feat and could see the Indian shore, I found it tough as the sea was pulling me down." (AFP) ❑

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Estate youths seek greener pastures

Growing population of young adults within the community of plantation workers in hill country towns of Nuwara Eliya, Hatton, Bandarawela and others see education as their best opportunity to break out of the miserable living conditions their parents endure. More are seeking lower-middle class employment in and out of their estates. "Out of the thirty staff running this show room, fifteen are children of plantation workers," said Malar Rani who attends to the stream of visitors inspecting the merchandize displayed at the Laboakellie tea estate, located 15 km north of Nuwara Eliya town.

"Our parents had to live in atrocious conditions despite contributing substantially to Sri Lanka's economy. The new generation will not be tied to the same trade. Although access to good schools are limited, the estate schools can still provide us a path to a better life," added another female employee.

Estate Management is concerned with the changing attitudes within the plantation youths which is likely to lead to a dwindling pool of workers prepared to pluck tea leaves.

In the same estate, Rani's mother earns Rs.147 per day picking tea leaves. "On the average she earns Rs.2500 a month. Only during the peak season she is allowed to work all 30 days to earn close to Rs.4500. Even then, our families would have normally accumulated debt of some sort, and there is scarcely any money left to lead a decent living or to save," Rani spoke of the predicament of her parents.

Line rooms, the extremely squalid quarters Tamil estate labourers live, have been a subject of many documentaries but little has changed in recent years to improve the living conditions of the plantation workers.

Ms.Thanapathy, a tea picker at the Bamboragola estate, 10 km north of Nuwara Eliya, said she is paid Rs.101 a day for a minimum weight of 15 kilos. "Health facilities given to us are barely adequate. Our hill country politicians do not take active interest in improving our living conditions," she said.

The trade unions, comprising the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU) and Joint Plantation Trade Union Committee (JPUTC) negotiate with the Employers Federation of Ceylon (EFC) on wage agreements.

However, estate management has little incentive to comply with these wage agreements.

Plantation workers checkered history goes back to 180 years. Their struggle towards obtaining full citizenship ended in October 2003 when a bill to grant citizenship to 168,141 stateless Tamils in Sri Lanka descended from people who settled in the hill districts of the island in the 19th century was passed without opposition in Sri Lanka's Parliament.

Time line of citizenship struggle of plantation workers:

* **1823**: South Indian Tamil laborers recruited from districts of Chenkelpettai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Thanjavoor, Thiruchirapalli and others arrive to work in plantations.
* **1920:** Mr.Natesa Iyer becomes first Indian representative to legislative council.
* **1924:** Two Indians nominated to legislative council. Franchise was limited to elite. Indian Tamils represented 12900 out of 205,000 electoral college votes.
* **1931:** Universal adult franchise was introduced in Sri Lanka under the Donoughmore constitution plantation workers were granted franchise.
* **1931-36:** Registered voters of Indian origin rose from 100,000 to 145,000.
* **1939:** Resolution introduced in the State Council to deport 15000 Indians. A second resolution moved by D. S Senanayake (independent Ceylon's first Prime Minister) to deport all Indians appointed to government service after 1934 and to discontinue the service of all those with less than ten years experience.
* **1939:** Arrival of Jawaharlal Nehru on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi to unite all the groups. Emergence of the Ceylon Indian Congress.
* **1947:** Elections bring political strength to the Indian Tamil community with the election of seven out of the 95 member Parliament. This was equal to the seven Tamil members elected from the North East.
* **1948:** The Ceylon Citizenship Act, though providing the qualifications to be a citizen, was designed to disqualify persons of Indian origin. The provision said that "only a person born in Ceylon prior to the date of the Act coming into force, of a father born in Ceylon could be recognised as a citizen". This decitizenized all persons of Indian origin since proof of birth of two generations was necessary.
* **1949:** Enactment of Indian and Pakistani (Residents) Citizenship Bill. It laid down qualifications for citizenship as registered citizens (sic). The qualifications inherent in the bill were designed to deny citizenship.
* **1951:** 237,034 applications requesting citizenship for 825,000 (90%) persons of Indian origin were made. Majority of applications were rejected as many were unable to produce evidence of birth in Sri Lanka, to provide proof of uninterrupted residency or to provide proof of an assured income.
* **1956:** Elections too proved negative to the Indian origin people since they had no strength to field candidates.
* **1960:** The government of Mrs. Bandaranaike created a nominated representation for the people of Indian origin and appointed Savumiamoorthy Thondaman to Parliament.
* **1964:** Mrs. Bandaranaike moved to solve the citizenship problem in keeping with the Sinhala thinking that persons of Indian origin should return to India. India, then led by Lal Bahadur Shastri agreed to this move by agreeing to accept 525, 000 back to India. Sri Lanka had agreed to grant citizenship to 300,000 persons leaving the future of 150,000 people to be settled later.
* **1974:** A further bartering was done under the Sirima (Sic) Indira Gandhi agreement, dividing the balance people between the two countries.
* **1965:** The UNP government too nominated Savumiamoorthy Thondaman to Parliament in return for his support to defeat the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike.
* **1977**: Savumiamoorthy Thondaman contested the Nuwara Eliya – Maskeliya multi member seat and was elected to Parliament as the third member. After thirty years since 1947 a member was

(continued on next page)

NEWS TRACK

Sergeant shot dead: *Aug 23 - A 40-year-old police Sergeant attached to the Police mess at Kalmunai has been shot dead allegedly by an LTTE pistol gang at Rest House Road in Kalmunai. Kalmunai police Inspector W.P. Wijetilleke said it appeared to be a revenge killing connected to the slaying by the Karuna faction of two top LTTE cadres on Friday, 20 August. The victim, W. Jayaratne has been shot in the chest with a 9 mm revolver later on the same day. Four spent cartridges also were found at the scene. Meanwhile, at Valachchenai an army captain and a corporal were also shot at and injured, police said. The LTTE had claimed that the Karuna loyalists had killed their two local leaders from the east with assistance from the military.*

Youth abducted: Aug 23 – According to police reports, two LTTE armed cadres forcibly entered a house in Division 7 of Akkaraipattu on Saturday night, 21 August, and abducted a youth who has been identified as Sabaratnam Sundaram aged 19. It is said that he was earlier abducted and kept in a prison for about two years. Escaping from LTTE custody, he surrendered to the STF at Akkaraipattu police and on a court order he was handed over to his parents. While he was with the parents, two LTTE cadres who arrived on a motorcycle abducted him again. A complaint has been lodged with the SLMM.

Remanded LTTE cadres protest: Aug 24 - Ten cadres of the LTTE climbed on the Batticaloa jail roof on Tuesday, 24 August, demanding that their case be expedited for their early release, Police said. The LTTE cadres, six males and four females, were arrested in July 2003 after Police found some arms and ammunition in the vehicles in which they were travelling. The protesting LTTE cadres complained that others who were arrested with weapons were released because of their connections with army intelligence. The LTTE cadres climbed the jail roof after they were produced in the Batticaloa court.

Soldier wounded: Aug 24 - A soldier was wounded in Kayankerni, Batticaloa 23 August as suspected LTTE cadres opened fire on a foot patrol, according to Military Spokesman Colonel Sumedha Perera. This is the second attack on military personnel by suspected LTTE cadres following the killing of two senior LTTE members including former Ampara district political wing leader 'Bhava' in a claymore mine attack in the same area on 21 August by suspected Karuna loyalists. Troops have reportedly identified three suspected LTTE cadres clad in black who had fired upon them and then disappearing into jungle, sources added.

Another shot dead in Colombo: Aug 26 - An ex-LTTE cadre who had subsequently been working as a military intelligence operative was shot dead in Colombo on Monday 23 August reportedly by an LTTE pistol gang operating in Colombo, according to police sources.

The victim, 48-year-old Suppiah Kugananthan, a resident of Vaddukodai, Jaffna had been working as an aid in the meditation centre of Sri Aurubindo Ashram at E. A. Cooray Mawatha, Wellawatte in Colombo. His brother-in-law Arumugam Ragunathan Gajendra was running the Ashram. The victim had been in Colombo for over five years and been working in the Ashram for over two years, while his family was living in Jaffna. Wellawatte Police crime OIC Deepthi Wijewickrama said according to witness statements the lone gunman had entered the Ashram around 8.30 pm when the victim was in conversation with a colleague named Wijeyanayake. The gunman had shot him dead at point blank range and fled. Army sources said the incident had been reported to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission.

Mahanayake ready to talk with LTTE: Aug 24 - The Venerable Thibbotuwawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Mahanayake Thera of the Malwatte Chapter expressed willingness to meet an LTTE delegation and discuss grievances of the Tamil speaking people, though he also urged the Tigers to be more flexible and stop child recruitment.

At a meeting with an Upcountry Peoples Front delegation led by P. Chandrasekeran, the new Mahanayake also agreed he would negotiate with the JVP in a bid to get their leaders to talk to the LTTE. During the meeting at the Malwatte temple, Mr. Chandrasekeran handed over to the Mahanayake a letter he had sent to the JVP a few weeks earlier urging it to hold discussions with the LTTE and that he was ready to be a facilitator.

The Mahanayake in response said he had held separate discussions with the President, the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader on the need for a southern consensus on the North and East conflict and that he would soon meet all three leaders together in a bid to reach an agreement. The Mahanayake said the LTTE leader should come down from his inflexible stand and face the realities and unless there was such flexibility it would be difficult to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Shot dead in court: Aug 24 - An associate of the former LTTE commander Karuna was shot dead inside courts in Akkaraipattu, south of Batticaloa, on Tuesday around 10.40 am on 24 August An unidentified gunman shot the man, identified as Mr. Perinpam Jeyakumar, when his name was called in courts to appear before the judge. The gunman alleged to be an LTTE cadre was seated inside the court as the victim was produced before the judge, DIG Eastern Province Neville Wijesinghe Special Task Force (STF) arrested Mr. Jeyakumar with a grenade and a pistol on 19 May while he was travelling with a colleague from Akkaraipattu to Kalmunai. The gunman who used an A 9 mm pistol to kill Jeyakumar in the Akkaraipattu courts got away, Police said. Three others including a jailor guard, court official and Policeman received minor injuries. The gunman had fled on a motorcycle parked near the Court amidst the commotion that followed the shooting. Another Karuna loyalist, Swarnamoorthi Shanthikumar, who had also been taken into custody and remanded together with Jeyakumar, was killed within the remand prison

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(continued from page 25)

elected to parliament by the people of Indian origin.

* **1978 to 1988:** Thondaman made several representations for the expeditious grant of citizenship under the two Indo Ceylon Agreements. He also urged that persons who were left out of the two agreements be granted Sri Lankan citizenship. Only 506, 000 persons applied for Indian citizenship out of the 600,000 envisaged under the agreements.
* **1988:** Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons (Special Provisions) Act No. 39 of 1988 was presented to Parliament by Premadasa and passed. This was opposed by the SLFP who voted against it. The people of Indian origin who were until then deprived of the rights flowing from citizenship were overwhelmed by their achieving their long dreamed goal.
* **2003:** A bill to grant citizenship to 168,141 stateless Tamils in Sri Lanka descended from people who settled in the hill districts of the island in the 19th century was passed Tuesday without opposition in Sri Lanka's Parliament. All 172 MPs who were present in the 225 seat Parliament voted for the bill to amend the citizenship act.

(Courtesy of TamilNet, August 30, 2004)

in an earlier incident.

Peace Council urges greater inclusivity: The National Peace Council has urged for a bipartisan approach by both the Government and the LTTE so that the peace process could be taken forward and a mutually agreed negotiated political settlement could be arrived.

In a news release on 26 August, the NPC said, "The difficulties that the government and LTTE are having in restarting the peace negotiations, together with the rising death toll due to targeted killings, are posing a major threat to the stability of the peace process. It needs to be recognised that killings due to the ethnic conflict, including internecine ones, are not a new phenomenon. However, the NPC said that the killings, which are taking place in a period of mutually agreed ceasefire, are totally unacceptable.

The experience during the past two decades shows that public demonstrations, statements and poster campaigns condemning these killings are not, by themselves, sufficient to bring them to a halt. The National Peace Council believes that the most effective method to bring about a human rights respecting and violence free society would to be take the peace process forward in a manner that would culminate in a mutually agreed negotiated political solution.

We note that in South Africa the peace process commenced with negotiations between the top leadership of the government and ANC. Thereafter the peace process was widened and conscious efforts were made to ensure the participation of all parties in the interim phase in a consociational form of power sharing interim government. The National Peace Council believes that in Sri Lanka as well, the next phase of the peace process requires a conscious effort to widen participation."

Sacking of three SLMC MPs held illegal: Aug 26 - The Supreme Court declared on 25 August that the decision taken by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) High Command to expel three of its members (who are also Parliamentarians) was illegal.

Parliamentarians Rishard Badiudeen, M. Najeeb and Hussein Bhaila were sacked from the party on disciplinary grounds. However the Supreme Court noted that the decision taken by the Congress to sack these MPs from the party was null and void especially as sufficient time was not granted to these three members to show cause for their alleged actions. The SLMC is reported to have given approximately 48 hours to these members to show cause on several allegations.

Hussein Bhaila was sacked from the party after he defected from the SLMC and joined the Government while Badiudeen and Najeeb was sacked over their alleged involvement in a campaign against SLMC Leader Rauff Hakeem suggesting sex scandal involving Mr Hakeem and and a female named Kumari.

US funded projects in Jaffna commences: Aug 26 - James Entwistle, Charge' d'Affaires adinterim at the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, today inaugurated three U.S.government-funded projects in Jaffna aimed at restoring basic services and improving livelihoods for conflict-affected segments of the population. The projects represent approximately $275,000 in support from the U.S.Agency for International Development (USAID) and will benefit more than 100,000 Sri Lankans.

In the morning, Mr. Entwistle handed over new equipment to the maternity ward and inspected two rehabilitated doctors' quarters at the Moolai Cooperative Hospital. Following that he visited two government welfare centers in the Sandilipay Division where U.S. support - including $20,000 from the U.S. Embassy Ambassador's Fund for Refugees - is providing portable, transitional shelter and constructing or improving latrines and water points for 450 families. "These are gifts from the people of the United States to the people of Jaffna, and they represent the benefits of peace for a community that clearly deserves it," Mr. Entwistle said at Moolai Hospital. "Moolai Cooperative Hospital is a Jaffna landmark, and seeing some of its earlier luster restored is gratifying for all of us. We encourage local residents and the Tamil diaspora, which has played such an important role in the project, to sustain the partnerships, dialogue and commitment that helped make this possible."

Tigers ready to meet Mahanayakas and JVP: The Tamil Tigers said that they were willing to meet with the Buddhist Maha Nayaka Theras and the main constituent of the United Peoples Freedom Alliance Government, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). LTTE political wing leader S.P. Thamilchelvan made this announcement in Kilinochchi when addressing reporters, soon after a meeting with Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Head Tronde Furhovde on 26 August. Thamilchelvan also said that the LTTE was ready to hold talks for peace with any concerned party. He also said that his organization had no connection with the recent killings in Colombo and the Eastern province, while also claiming that such incidents woul not harm the Ceasefire Agreement signed between LTTE leader Prabhakaran and ex Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe signed in 2002. Thamilchelvan also alleged that Karuna and the Eelam peoples Democratic Party should bear the responsibility for the recent assassinations and accused them for disrupting the peace process.

SLMM calls for halt to killings: The Scandinavian truce monitoring mission has demanded an immediate end to the ongoing wave of killings in the east. The mission's head Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Trond Furuhovde is reported to have emphasised this when he met LTTE political wing leader S. P. Thamilchelvan and Sea Tiger leader 'Colonel' Soosai at Kilinochchi on 26 August.

Furuhovde flew to Kilinochchi after meeting Defence Secretary Cyril Herath on the previous day at the Defence Ministry where the two parties had discussed the entire gamut of contentious issues, particularly the killings allegedly carried out by the LTTE.

"The mission's head stressed in no uncertain terms that there shouldn't be further killings. Killings have to be stopped," SLMM's spokesperson told journalists..

Furuhovde had also emphasised the need to resume direct contacts between army top brass in charge of Batticaloa and the LTTE's local leadership. "We agreed in principle to meet the respective commanders separately to facilitate direct contacts between them as soon as possible," he said.

This was among four major issues taken up during the meeting, he said. The setting up of security installations close to the strategic Trincomalee navy base in violation of the Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA), the growing dispute between the army and the LTTE at Nagarkovil in the Jaffna peninsula and the detention of government personnel and LTTE cadres when they stray. The mission spokesperson said that the LTTE agreed to co-operate with the ongoing inquiries to ascertain government claim on new LTTE camps in Trincomalee. They have also explored the possibility in working out a plan under which the army and the LTTE could pull back their frontline positions at Nagarkovil. Senior military officials said the LTTE advanced about 30 metres and set up an observation post in the no man's land. This was about five months after the Cease-Fire Agreement in February 2002. Later they had connected this observation post with their other positions. Despite a strong protest to the truce monitors and a ruling favourable to the army the LTTE held on to the new position. The military said that the LTTE recently advanced further in to the no-man's land and the distance between the frontlines had been narrowed to less than 40 metres.

SLT restores internet services: Aug 27 - The Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) restored its internet service fully, following a breakdown lasting many days. The SLT said that its dial up connections, internet, ADSL and e-mail services were back on track. In a news release SLT Chief Marketing Officer Kapila Chandrasena said, "the company assures its customers that such an interruption would not happen again as SLT will endeavour to have multiple alternative routes in both fibre optical undersea cable and

satellite media". Since the accidental service interruption, SLT has also gained direct connectivity to Singapore, Germany and India apart from its direct routes to USA and Japan. As a result of these enhanced routing options, SLT's global connectivity bandwidth will be further increased from its current 310 Mega bytes per second level, he said.

War is no option for Govt:: Aug 27 - War is certainly not a chosen option of the Sri Lanka Government and we hope that the LTTE would respond to our request in the same spirit by resuming negotiations as soon as possible. The LTTE should understand that the Government is exercising great restraint and patience for the sake of peace and maintaining the ceasefire. The Government so far has remained independent without any commitment to any groups that opposes the LTTE. These statements were made by Cabinet Spokesman of the Sri Lanka Government, Mangala Samaraweera, at a media briefing in Colombo on 26 August.

Samaraweera said that the ongoing killing spree unleashed in the Eastern region would make the creation of a conducive climate for peace talks more difficult and that it is not only a severe strain on the peace process but also tests the Government's limits patience and tolerance. Asked about the LTTE's charge that the Government was lending secret support to the Karuna faction of the LTTE, Mr Samaraweera reiterated that the Government had remained 'firmly independent' of the ongoing factional rivalry within the LTTE. "Sri Lankan Army must be commended for its discipline and commitment to peace in maintaining the CFA despite several provocations during the last two years," he said while referring to alleged attacks on army patrols in the East.

Displaced families go to Court: About one hundred internally displaced families which have been refused permission to move into their homes and do cultivation in their agricultural lands in High Security Zones in Valigamam north in the Jaffna district are to file fundamental rights violation applications in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, TamilNet reported.

Human rights lawyer S. Ganeshalingam, after consulting IDP families in Jaffna is to file applications in the Supreme Court on the ground that the fundamental rights guaranteed to them under the Sri Lankan Constiution have been violated by the action of the authorities in refusing to allow these people return to their own homes..

The Army at the inquiry into an FR application by a displaced family recently said it would allow the petitioner to return to his house. The army said that its permission would be limited only to the particular case and not to other displaced families.

Hence the civil groups in the Jaffna district have taken steps to file more FR applications on behalf of displaced families.

Thousands of families are living in welfare centres as they are refused permission by the army for resettlement in their houses and cultivate their agricultural lands located in the HSZs.

Former Minister summoned to give evidence: Aug 28 - Colombo High Court issued summons on former Minister and present opposition UNP Parliamentarian Jayalath Jayawardena to give evidence in the trial in connection with the bomb attack in which Major General Lucky Algama and eleven others were killed.

The High Court Judge Sunil Rajapakse issued summons on Mr. Jayawardena and Chandranee Algama to appear and give evidence before court on September 13in the case in which a suicide bomber attacked the UNP Presidential Election Rally on 19 December 1999. In this case the Attorney General had indicted five accused, Nagalingam Ravindran alias 'Ravi', Selvarathnam Siddarthan alias 'Kady', Rathnavel Ajith Kumarasiri, R. A. Ajith Rohana and Ambalavanar Jeyabalan on 101 charges under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The accused are charged with conspiracy to murder during the period October 1 to December 18, 1999 and aiding and abetting Sri Skandarajah Ashok alias Shokkan to commit the murder of the Retired Major General Lakshman Chula Algama and eleven others by blasting himself.

Doctors complain of LTTE 'taxation': Aug 28 - The Government Medical Officers Association has urged the government to put a halt to LTTE taxation of doctors serving in the North and East. Assistant Secretary of the GMOA Dr. Uditha Herath pressed the Health Ministry to intercede on behalf of the 1,000 odd doctors serving in the North and East and to take immediate action to bring the present situation under control by stopping the current practice followed by the LTTE. According to him a majority of the doctors in the North and East were from areas out side the North and East.

The GMOA branch union members of the North and East hospitals, who brought the current crisis situation to the notice of the executive committee, had stressed that the present situation only added to their burdens on a larger scale. As it is they undergo a tremendous amount of hardship by serving in the war ravaged North and East. Some of the places in which these doctors serve do not even afford them the basic facilities such as clean water, Herath said.

At one time doctors in the North and East were paid a special allowance (mission allowance) for travelling. Most of them have to go by air or bus. However, that payment was brought to an abrupt halt in the recent past and presently doctors are paid only their basic salary.

Now the LTTE taxes them for all the goods and services being taken into LTTE controlled areas. He claimed that the doctors were forced to pay a tax for even the table fan that they were forced to take since they were not given such facilities.

"As they are in government service, the State should take some action regarding this situation. Even the security of some of the government hospitals is threatened and the government seems to be turning a blind eye to all this," he accused.

"We have never discriminated amongst the patients - as Tamil, Sinhala, Security forces or the LTTE," he said. He added that the government should find it possible with the on going cease-fire and the presence of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to find a solution to this trial the LTTE has decided to put the government doctors through.

Aid package a ploy to divide country says JVP: Aug 28 - The JVP has described the aid package of US$ 4.5 billion pledged to Sri Lanka in Tokyo by Donor countries in June last year as a 'ploy' to divide the country. Addressing a meeting of the Patriotic National Movement, (PNM), held at the provincial town of Veyangoda on 27 August, the Propaganda Secretary of the JVP, Mr. Wimal Weerawansa, accused the UNP, and the pro-LTTE NGOs and the international community for attempting to force the government into a situation where a 'no' was impossible to the LTTE's ISGA proposals. "All these people are trying to force the government to a point where it would have to say 'yes' to the ISGA proposals to obtain a loan of $4.5 billion in order to bring the cost of living down.

The people of the country have to decide whether they are ready to betray the country to the LTTE merely for 4.5 billion dollars or ready to contribute to a national economy to uphold the nation, as the country has been dancing according to the tunes of the international community for more than 25 years," he said.

Referring to press releases issued by the Opposition Leader, Ranil Wickremesinghe urging the government to start peace talks immediately, Mr. Weerawansa said the UNP leader was attempting to kill two birds with one shot. "The UNP leader in his press releases maintained that the government should reveal whether they are ready to talk on the ISGA or not, because he knew well that the government was not ready to do that. Then again, he says the government should start talks to qualify for US$ 4.5 billion aid. He knew that once the government starts talks on the ISGA, it cannot be without agreeing to the ISGA proposals. Thus, one of his missions would be achieved. Then again the very moment the government starts talks on the ISGA, he knew the JVP would withdraw from the alliance, so his other mission of taking back power would be accom-

plished," Mr. Weerawansa said.

He also noted that the LTTE was trying to prove to the international community that they have everything to establish a separate state by living in a mythical self-governing entity. "LTTE while stating that they have a separate area where only Tamil speaking people are living, referring to the Muslims in eastern province, keeps on violating human rights of those innocent people by not allowing them to cultivate at least their paddy lands," he said.

Another killing in Colombo: Aug 29 - LTTE gunmen shot dead Tissaweerasingham Surendran alias Suresh alias Dushyanthan Kumar, described as an informant for the Military Intelligence on the outskirts of Colombo on 28 August, raising the number of rival members killed in the city and suburbs to 15 during the past two months. A gang of four gunmen, alleged to be LTTE cadres, armed with grenades and pistols stormed the Pepiliyana house of Mr. Surendran around 5 a.m. and shot him dead with a 9mm pistol. The men had broken open the door to enter the house, where they pushed aside the victim's sister-in-law, and shot Mr. Surendran, who hailed from Batticaloa.

The victim's sister-in-law had told Boralesgamuwa police that the gunmen broke open the door and pounced on their target. But he had fought back, inflicting injuries on some of the attackers. But the attackers had overpowered him and shot him before exploding a hand grenade inside the rented apartment. The blast, police said was to scare the neighbours who had gathered outside the house who had then fled the scene.

Mr. Surendran was formerly an LTTE member, but left the organisation in 2001 and arrived in Colombo. He was a close friend of PLOT Mohan who was also killed in Colombo recently reportedly by LTTE gunmen. Military Spokesman Sumedha Perera said Mr. Surendran was the 21st civilian informant working with the army to be killed since the Ceasefire Agreement was signed in February 2002. It is learnt that at the time of his murder, Mr Surendran making arrangements to migrate to a foreign country.

In another previous incident in Colombo , an ex-cadre of the Liberation Tigers named Suppiah Thunganathan (48 yrs) from Vaddukoddai was shot and killed on 23 August while he was at a Hindu meditation centre at Wellawatte in Colombo. It was alleged that he has been killed by the LTTE on suspicion of being informant to Sri Lanka army

Sept 2 - The wife of the murdered Surendran had allegedly aided and abetted the LTTE in carrying out the killing. Boralesgamuwa police told Gangodawila Magistrate on 1 September that the two suspects had made this confession to police.

Govt should convey its stand in 'one voice': Aug 29 - LTTE political wing Leader S.P. Tamilselvan has called upon the Government to 'in one voice' convey to the facilitators its stand on the peace talks so that Oslo could proceed with the agenda. He made this statement during a recent meeting in Kilinochchi in northern Sri Lanka with members of the Forum of Federations, Canada.

The Honourable Bob Rae, Chair and President of Forum of Federations and Former Premier of Ontario, and Professor David Cameron, University of Toronto, Department of Political Science and member of the Boad of Directors of Forum of Federations visited Kilinochchi on 27 August and held discussions with LTTE's Political Head.

The LTTE has expressed its readiness to recommence negotiations and that was accepted by the then United National Front government and it is indeed unfortunate that the change of government resulted in change of stance although the LTTE as one party, has not changed its position and commitment, Tamilselvan reportedly told the Forum, as reported in TamilNet.

The Forum representatives, led by its Chairman Bob Rae emphasized the inevitable necessity to recommence negotiations, for it is only through dialogue that the necessary steps can be taken first to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the Tamil people and then move forward in the peace process to find lasting peace in the island. Responding to their wishes and sentiment, Tamilselvan had said that the LTTE has submitted the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposals with a view to first address the urgent humanitarian needs of the people in the war-torn North East, win their confidence, and make them real stakeholders in the peace process that would usher lasting peace in their life. Tamilselvan had said that institutionalizing the ISGA would rather prevent secession and pave the way for unity and lasting peace. He also had explained that the final resolution of a protracted conflict naturally entails protracted negotiations and therefore time consuming which will aggravate the hardships caused by war rather than alleviate and hence the necessity to set up the interim mechanism first, TamilNet reported.

Govt and LTTE urged to sign mines ban: Aug 29 - The Landmine Ban Advocacy Forum (LBAF) has once again reiterated its appeal to the Government of Sri Lanka to sign the Ottawa Convention banning the use and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines and the LTTE to sign Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment.

The Landmine Ban Advocay Forum, is a group of Humanitarian Organizations, which includes the UNDP and UNICEF. The Forum also notes that signing the Ottawa Convention and the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment, and sticking to their provisions, ensures that the threat from anti-personnel mines will not increase in Sri Lanka. Landmines have proven to be ineffective in military operations. More civilians are maimed, killed or negatively affected by mines than any military targets. Landmines block the resumption of normal activity as well as reconstruction and resettlement of those displaced by conflicts. In Sri Lanka, at least 153 civilians have lost their lives and 889 have been injured by landmines since 1995. These figures do not include government forces and LTTE cadre affected by mines.

Japan not to support separatism: Aug 30 -.The Japanese government reiterated that they will not support separatism, adding that Japan hopes a peaceful solution will be derived to Sri Lanka's two decade long ethnic conflict. Speaking at a media briefing the Japanese ambassador in Sri Lanka, Akiyo Suda said, "LTTE should not persisting on its ISGA proposals as the basis for the resumption of peace talks, they should come with a federal solution". He also said that: "The Japanese government is seriously concerned with the stalled peace negotiations. President Kumaratunga and her government have taken some measures in order to recommence the peace talks between the government and the LTTE. The Japanese government therefore hopes that the LTTE will volunteer in the talks. The LTTE should be more serious about it." "We discussed the Oslo agreement and all I can say is that Tamilselvan understood this point well. His response was not negative at all. However, I made a special request to Tamilselvan to consider a federal solution, apart from the ISGA proposal," the Ambassador said.

According to him, the LTTE is committed towards the peace solution and would like to resume talks immediately. However, the LTTE had explained to the Ambassador that due to different views emanating from the government and certain parties from the south, there was some difficulty in coming to an agreement. Referring to the recent killings in the country, the Ambassador said that the recent political killings are of great concern to the Japanese government. "The government and people of Sri Lanka should not consider these killings as internal, but take them seriously and address these issues. These killings are a serious problem for the international community and are against democracy and human rights," he said. "When I told Tamilselvan that at present we see an increase in child recruitment, his only response was that such activities take place in government controlled areas only," explained the Ambassador.

Ranil helped LTTE create a parallel state: Aug 30 - The Government's main ally, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has once again claimed that the LTTE strengthened its military machine under the previ-

ous United National Front regime. JVP Propaganda Secretary Wimal Weerawansa told the Independent Television Network that the greatest threat the country faced under the Ranil Wickremesinghe regime was the assistance given to the LTTE to create a parallel regime under the guise of peace. Weerawansa further alleged that in the past two years the LTTE had built a parallel state, thanks to the so-called peace process of Ranil Wickremesinghe.

EPDP complains to EU: Aug 30 - The Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) has voiced their concern about problems faced by unarmed pro-democratic Tamil political parties in carrying forward their political work in the country. They voiced their concern when they met representatives of the European Union recently. The EU delegation in return, assured that they would do their best in taking all necessary measures to prevent any undemocratic moves by any group.

In the discussions, Resident Representative of the European Union in Sri Lanka Wouter Wilton and Her Excellency Susan Brin Gard, Ambassador for Netherlands, represented the EU, while the EPDP's General Secretary and Minister Douglas Devananda and several other senior EPDP members represented the party. It was also noted at the meeting that the recent political killings in North, East and Colombo was a hindrances in resuming peace talks.

Police Chief wants review of ceasefire: Aug 30 - Sri Lanka's Inspector General of Police Indra De Silva has suggested reviewing certain sections of the existing the ceasefire agreement to prevent the spate of recent killings in the east and in Colombo attributed to the Tamil Tigers, according a report in the Daily News. This highly unpredictable and new phenomenon of killing of informants and rivals in Colombo has developed following the Ceasefire Agreement where it allowed the free movement of public from the North-East to various other Provinces, he said. We need to reconsider that particular section of the CFA (ceasefire agreement) since the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) has misused this for their advantage, he added.

TNA to promote ISGA: Aug 30 – The LTTE leadership has called upon the Tamil Nationalist Alliance (TNA) MPs to concentrate and work from within and outside Parliament to promote the merits and need for the LTTE's ISGA proposal and to reactivate the stalled peace process. This message was delivered to the 22 TNA MPs when they met the LTTE political wing leader S.P. Tamilchelvan in Kilinochchi during a three hour long meeting on 30 August. Mr. Thamilchelvan and Mr. Sampanthan met press briefly after TNA's meeting at the Planning Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers in Kilinochchi.

"We have created three different action groups for the tasks of promoting awareness in the Parliament, awareness in the South and advocacy in the diplomatic circles," Mr. R. Sampanthan, Secretary General of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) told the press in Kilinochchi following the meeting. He told reporters that the action groups would work among all sections of people, including the Muslim Community, Tamil Community in up-country, the Sinhala Community and importantly among the International Community.

Mr. Thamilchelvan said that there have been "baseless criticisms and malicious propaganda against the ISGA proposals and the Tamil nationhood" recently in the south and noted that he was satisfied with the outcome of the discussions he held with the TNA parliamentarians. "The LTTE would intensify our efforts to clarify and address ISGA issues at all levels including the International Community," he told the press.

Govt. to relocate refugees: Aug 31 - There are around 22,000 families living in Welfare centres of the North and East at present. Earlier, 23,000 families had left these centres and returned to resettle in their homes and villages. A spokesman for the government said on 30 August that over 100,000 families had resettled spontaneously following the cease fire agreement (CFA) signed over two years ago.

However, the government intends to take urgent steps to resettle and relocate those remaining in welfare centres, he pointed out. Two programs have already been implemented in Kilinochchi and Vavuniya to relocate 1,500 persons on state lands. "The government aims at relocating landless internally displaced persons (IDPs) in state owned land (SOL)," the spokesman said pointing out that there was plenty of SOL available in the North and East. He pointed out that they would be resettled at 'Menik Farm Village,' in the Vavuniya District while others would be relocated in 'Allippallai village,' in the Kilinochchi District. The government would give them around 40 - 50 perches of land to relocate themselves, the spokesman said.

According to informed sources of the Ministry of Relief Rehabilitation and Resettlement, the government has already given 76,791 families livelihood assistance following resettlement to the value of Rs. 1,785 million. They claimed that the funds to pay the families had been given by the World Bank. The European Union had provided another Rs. 835 million to resettle 32,000 families. They said that 5,000 landless families of the above mentioned number would benefit from the European Union fund given for livelihood assistance.

EU closely watching Monitors and Norwegians: Aug 31 - The European Union said it was closely observing the activities of the Ceasefire monitors as well as the Norwegian government as facilitators. The resident representative of EU Wouter Wilton said, "We are watching the activities of the SLMM and the roll of Norwegians as facilitators." He also said that Ceasefire monitoring mission has to work with a real understanding of the responsibility vested in them. He also said that the EU is very much concerned over the recent spate of killings and asked the LTTE to stop child abduction and recruitment of under child to their organization.

Master Plan for new Trinco Campus: Aug 31- Eastern University administration has prepared a master plan to rebuild the Trincomalee Campus of the East University at a new site at Konesapuri, seven km off north of Trincomalee town towards Nilaveli, where two hundred acres of land located has been allocated for the project. The Trincomalee campus is now functioning in buildings in the heart of Trincomalee town, without sufficient space to conduct classes and with substandard residential facilities to students, according to sources.

The management of the East University last recently held a one-day workshop in Hotel Club Oceanic in Trincomalee to create awareness about the plan for a new campus among the Trincomalee residents. Local heads of government departments and non-governmental organizations, principals of the leading schools, parliamentarians and educationists attended the workshop.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has allocated 90.1 million rupees for the project. The UGC has already released 20 million rupees for initial work of relocation. "The administration of the East University has decided to release 3 million rupees for this project," said Professor S.Raveendranath, Vice Chancellor of the East University in his inaugural address at workshop.

Trincomalee district parliamentarian Mr.Sampanthan speaking at the workshop reminded the audience that fifty years ago foundation stone was laid in Trincomalee for a Tamil university and about one hundred acres of valuable land was acquired for this purpose. However the project never saw the light of the day. "I strongly urge the East University administration to ensure the future development of the Trincomalee campus at Konesapuri site. I do hope before August next year the master plan now under study would be come a reality. I also hope that the Trincomalee campus becomes a full-fledged university in Trincomalee soon," Mr.Sampanthan said.

Trincomalee Campus Rector Fr.Dr.C.P.Rajendram said all should work hard to make the Master Plan a reality. Peace is essential for all

such development, he added. The relocation of the Trincomalee campus to Konesapuri from the present site is expected to commence in October this year, he said. The Trincomalee Campus is expected to formally start functioning from the new location from August 2005, he added.

Campaign against NE merger: Sept 1 - A new campaign "Awakening East" organized by a Sinhala nationalist group and backed by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a constituent of the ruling coalition, demanding the de-merger of the northeast province was held Wednesday, 1 September, in Kalmunai Town Hall in Amparai district in the eastern province. The meeting was attended by mainly Sinhalese and Muslims, media sources said.

Supporters of the JVP, mainly Sinhalese from Trincomalee, Kantalai and other parts of the neighbouring districts of the east were transported by vehicles to Kalmunai to attend the campaign meeting, according to sources.

This was the first campaign launched by a JVP backed Sinhalese nationalist group against the merger of the North-East province. The campaign speeches propagated the theme that the eastern province was forcibly merged with the northern province. Organizers of the campaign demanded that the eastern province should be demerged from the North and should be administered as a separate entity.

Big protest against Bata: Sept 1 - More than a thousand Bata workers and rights activists demonstrated in Colombo on Wednesday, 1 September, demanding the giant footwear manufacturer to take back the six hundred employees it sacked two months ago. The demonstrators also urged the government to repeal the Termination of Workmen's Services Act, which removes legal safeguards against indiscriminate lay offs by employers, according to organisers of the protest. Traffic was blocked by the protestors in the heart of Colombo's busy business hub.

Before it came to power, the governing Alliance (UPFA) promised to abolish the Act.. Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) led vociferous protests against the Act when it was in the opposition. Bata workers charge that JVP "betrayed" them after it came to power. The demonstration was organised by Joint Trade Union Front, a coalition of 42 trade unions, and Alliance to Protect National Resources and Human Rights.

Training for unemployed graduates: Sept 2 - A three month training programme for unemployed graduates, 168 selected from the Vavuniya district, and 150 from the Trincomalee district, was inaugurated on Thursday, 2 September in the Vavuniya Town Hall and Trincomalee Town Hall.

The programme is part of a controversial scheme by President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government to provide state jobs for more forty one thousand unemployed graduates. The scheme was introduced after mass protests and hunger strikes backed by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) which is part of the governing coalition. Critics say it will cause a huge strain on the cash strapped Sri Lankan treasury. Seventeen thousand unemployed graduates are to be trained all over the island in the first phase.

The hundred sixty eight unemployed graduates in Vavuniya were selected for the first phase of the training and employment programme, Vavuniya Government Agent Mr. K. Ganesh said. The large number of graduates in the district who weren't selected would be included in the next phase of the training programme, he said.

Once the training is over, the graduates would be employed in various government departments in the district, the GA said. Vanni district MPs Mr. Sivanthan Kishore and Mr. Sivasakthi Anandan also took part in the inauguration of the training programme.

In the Trincomalee event, Trincomalee district parliamentarian Messrs R.Sampanthan and K.Thurairetnasingham, (both are from the Tamil National Alliance) and Mr Jayantha Wijesekara, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) parliamentarian participated in the event. Dissident Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) parliamentarian of the district Mr.Najeeb Abdul Majeed did not attend the event. The Government Agent and District Secretary of the Trincomalee district Mr. Gamini Rodrigo presided. He said 152 graduates would be divided into four groups and Sinhala medium computer training will be provided at Trincomalee Vidyaloka Vidiyalayam and Tamil medium training at Trincomalee technical College, he added.

SLMM response awaited on killings: Sept 2 - In the wake of the unabated spate of killings attributed to the LTTE, the Government's Peace Secretariat has recently written to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) requesting an explanation as to why such a trend was allowed to drag on.

According to inside sources, the Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat, Jayantha Dhanapala, who was concerned that the ceasefire might be in jeopardy if the spate of killings continued had already sent a letter to the SLMM and was awaiting a response.

The sources said there had been an exchange of correspondence between the Peace Secretariat and the SLMM and that they were hoping to take the matter up during the weekly meetings with the monitors. On several occasions the SLMM had alerted the Peace Secretariat officers on the possibility of war breaking out, if the killing spree was to continue.

The latest in the series of killings was the incident on 29 August when suspected LTTE gunmen shot dead another Army informant in Pepiliyana raising the number of rival members killed in the city and suburbs to 15 during the past two months.

Former Minister's bail application refused: Sept 2 - The Colombo Chief Magistrate refused the bail application of A.R.M. Abdul Cader, a minister in the previous government under Ranil Wickramasinghe, who is in remand in connection with the alleged misuse of Rs. 1 million from the Samurdhi funds. The former minister was remanded in prison custody till September 15.

The order of the Chief Magistrate said that Samurdhi fund was initiated with Rs.20 million with the assistance of the government. The ten affidavits submitted while the former minister was in remand cannot be accepted. The statements given to the Anti Corruption Crime Division earlier and the affidavits were contradictory. Magistrate queried how the statements could differ and said that those affidavits cannot be accepted as they were made under influence. The former minister could not be granted bail under medical grounds as the minister was only suffering from diabetes, blood pressure and an injury through an accident, which can be treated at the prison hospital, or if needed at a paying ward. The former minister, who is presently an opposition MP, was allowed to attend the Parliament sessions.

Solheim to return to Sri Lanka: Sept 2 - In a bid to resume the stalled peace process between the Government and the LTTE, Norwegian Special Peace envoy Erik Solheim is expected to arrive in Colombo on September 13. Informed sources said that during his four-day visit he would meet government officials including President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, as well as senior LTTE representatives such as its political head S.P. Tamilselvan. Solheim will also hold discussions with Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe. Two days ago Mr. Solheim held talks with LTTE's theoretician Anton Balasingham in London, where he is reported to have warned that the continuous violence including the killings many of which were allegedly carried out by the LTTE, would undermine the international community's support to the Sri Lanka peace process.

Hartal in Trinco against abductions: Sept 2 - Trincomalee residents in large numbers came out in protest against the abduction by the LTTE of two home guards. Shops were closed, transport came to standstill and the entire Trincomalee town was deserted, DIG (Eastern Range) Neville

Wijesinghe said. The hartal had been organised by the North-East Sinhala Organisation, sources said.

It was alleged that two home guards and four civilians were abducted by the LTTE at an area under LTTE control in Gomarankadawala two weeks ago.The LTTE later released the four civilians. They later told the police that the two home guards were being held at a Tiger camp in Muttur. According to them, the two home guards attached to the Trincomalee Police had been detailed to provide security to the civilians who went to uncleared area to purchase fishing equipment.

Efforts by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission to get the LTTE to release the two home guards have not been successful. Military spokesman Col. Sumedha Perera said that the LTTE was demanding the release of two armed LTTE cadres who had been arrested by the police for entering g the government administered area without prior permission, in exchange for the two home guards.

Pregnant woman stripped and assaulted: Sept 2 - A police Sub Inspector was remanded in custody for allegedly stripping and assaulting a pregnant woman till she suffered a miscarriage. High Court Judge Sarath Ambepitiya remanded Sub Inspector Nimal Ranjith Kumara who was attached to the Mirihana police in the suburbs of Colombo. He was charged along with two other officers, Kumara Yapa Dissanayake and Kalinga Susantha Wijeratne of the same station

The police officers in this case are charged with torture and cruel inhuman and degrading treatment of Ms Siriyawathi who was arrested on suspicion of a theft in October 2000. Ms Siriyawathi said she was pregnant at the time of the arrest and suffered a a miscarriage as a result of the violence used against her. She said the police officers had taken her to the station, stripped and assaulted her till she fainted. She claimed they hit her on the abdomen with a baton and this led to the miscarriage.

Eastern leaders fly to Kilinochchi: Sept 3 - Col. Ramesh, special commander of the LTTE in the Batticaloa-Amparai District, left for Kilinochchi Friday 3 September from Kokkaddicholai, Batticaloa. He was accompanied by Mr. E. Kousalyan, head of the LTTE's political division for the Batticaloa-Amparai District and LTTE commanders 'Ram' and 'Janarthan'. They boarded a Sri Lankan Air Force helicopter at the Kokkaddicholai general grounds, an LTTE spokesman in Batticaloa said. Col. Ramesh was going to Kilinochchi for consultations with the LTTE leadership regarding the situation in the east and the Cease Fire Agreement, a Tiger spokesman in Batticaloa said, according to TamilNet.

Fishermen and Tigers clash: Sept 3 - According to local reports, on Tuesday 31 August, eleven fishermen aboard three fishing trawlers were severely beaten and taken into custody by suspected LTTE cadres early for entering a self-proclaimed LTTE 'High Security Zone' in the sea off Palaitivu in northern Sri Lanka.. A trawler had been completely destroyed and one fisherman severely injured in the attack in which firearms were used.

It was later reported that on Wednesday 1 September, hundreds of fishermen gathered and protested against the LTTE's use of firearms at the fishermen in front of the Sinnakadai Northern Province Fishermen's Co-operative Society office managed by the LTTE in Jaffna. It was also reported that the protesting fishermen chased away senior Tiger leaders from the office in retaliation against the attack on them the previous day.

According to military sources on Thursday 2 September ten of the fishermen were released along with three fishing trawlers, but the LTTE kept the fishing equipment worth around Rs. 300,000. They said LTTE officials also warned the fishermen not to come to the Palaitivu sea area, which the LTTE considers it a 'High Security Zone'. The one fisherman not released was injured in the incident and is known to be warded in an LTTE hospital in Kilinochchi. The fishermen alleged that they were kept in a heavily guarded Kilinochchi camp and were beaten up.

Military spokesman Col.Sumedha Perera said they had informed this to Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission as the LTTE had clearly violated the Cease-fire Agreement and the MoU. He pointed out that LTTE had no right to demarcate a High Security Zone of its own in the sea. They have violated the Ceasefire by opening fire at civilians, he said.

1000 Army type uniforms seized: Sept 2 - About 1000 military camouflage uniforms imported from Bangkok and consigned to a businessman in Kotahena were seized by the Customs, a defence ministry official said. He said the uniforms valued at about half a million rupees were very much like army outfits. The businessman had been arrested by a special CID team and a further probe was continuing to find out whether the uniforms were imported for the use of the Tigers.

Meanwhile, the Defence Ministry had ordered the confiscation of the stock after checking a sample. The ministry had also advised that the stock be handed over to the Army. Few months ago Customs detained another stock of LTTE camouflage uniform material at the Grayline Container Examination yard. The uniform material was of the striped kind worn by LTTE cadres.

Party leaders agree on compulsory NICs: Sept 2 - Political Party leaders unanimously agreed to a Government proposal for making the National Identity Card compulsory for voting at future National elections. In a rare consensus witnessed in the national political scene, even the minority parties who were initially against the idea endorsed the proposal at the meeting presided over by Deputy Speaker Geethanjana Gunawardena at the Parliament Complex on 2 September..

According to a Government spokesmen the NIC's will made available to all citizens 12 months after the enactment of legislation now before Parliament. "The Registrar of Persons and the Commissioner of Elections have agreed to set the wheels in motion to accomplish this task within the stipulated period," he said. "Although the Registrar of Persons and the Elections Department say that they could reach the target task within six months we are anxious to ensure a foolproof method so that no one will be left out. Hence the decision to give it an additional six months," the spokesmen said.

Sethusamudram project to go ahead: Sept 2 - The Indian government has approved plans to form a new company to implement the Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project that will allow ships to avoid circumnavigation around Sri Lanka. The new company, Sethusamudram Corporation Ltd, a special purpose vehicle, will raise finances for the project to create a navigable channel from Gulf of Mannar to the Bay of Bengal through Palk Strait, or for any other project in the port sector, an official statement said after a meeting of the cabinet on 2 September.

The Sethusamudram project involves linking the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar on the east coast of India by creating a shipping canal through Rameswaram Island, providing a continuous navigable sea route around the Indian peninsula. It will reduce the distance between Gulf of Mannar and Palk Strait by 400 nautical miles. The project, conceived several decades back, is estimated to cost Rs.20 billion with a debt equity ratio of 1:1.5. It will involve digging a 44.9 nautical mile channel between India and Sri Lanka.

The authorised capital of the company, to be headquartered in Chennai, has been fixed at Rs.8 billion with the Shipping Corporation of India and the Tuticorin Port Trust expected to contribute Rs.500 million each. Five other organisations - Dredging Corporation of India, Chennai Port Trust, Ennore Port Trust, Vishakhapatnam Port Trust and Paradip Port Trust - would contribute Rs.300 million each. "The balance equity will be subscribed by the government of India and others, the statement said.

Four arrested for filming 'sensitive' places: Sept 3 - Acting on a tip off, the Sri Lankan army arrested four persons with a high tech video camera at the Headquarters of the Sri Lanka Telecom on 2 September while they were filming the area. They had been filming while they were travelling on a private passenger bus from Kotahena to Nugegoda in

Colombo, a military spokesman said. Alleging that the suspects belonged to the LTTE, he said, "They have filmed many locations in the Fort High Security Zone including Colombo Harbour, Army Headquarters and the SLT Headquarters during the day and have also filmed every security barrier in the city." The suspects, who have been identified as Joseph Stephen Weerakumar, Alfred Kamalan Girideshan, Anthonypillai Alex and Anthonypillai, were handed over to the Police Special Investigation Division for further investigations.

Grenade thrown at hotel: Sept 4 - A gang of young men reportedly threw a hand grenade into a hotel at Oddamavadi, in eastern Batticaloa on 3 September. Blaming the LTTE for the incident, military sources claimed that "the group armed with a T-56 entered 'Hotel Jeseema' which is situated at the main Street and lobbed a grenade at the hotel causing damages to the building, but no one was injured due to the explosion". He also said that after the bomb was thrown, the LTTE cadres had fired shots in the air using a T-56 weapon before leaving the location. The reason for this act is unknown.

30% registered voters sans NICs: Sept 4 - Following a consensus reached between all political party leaders to make the National Identity Card compulsory to all voters at future elections, reports reveal that nearly 4 million voters in Sri Lanka sans identity Card. The present total number of registered voters is a little over 12.8 million. Mid last week, during the Party Leaders meeting held at the Parliamentary Complex, all leaders including minority party leaders unanimously agreed to the proposal for making the National Identity Card compulsory for voting at future National elections. Currently, only nearly 70% of the total number of registered voters has received their national identity cards. However, following the consensus reached between all leaders, the Government is making plans to issue National Identity Cards to all citizens who are without it within approximately eight months.

Indian PM on ferry service: Sept 4 - Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has said that the Indian Central Government "is not intending to start ferry services between Tuticorin and Sri Lanka until an adequate security infrastructure is in place and appropriate conditions obtained for its operation," the Chennai based 'News Today' reported on 3 September.

In response to the letter of TamilNadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, the Prime Minister, in his letter dated 27 August, a copy of which was released to the press, said, 'the points made by her were examined carefully'. (Jayalalithaa strongly opposed the Union Surface Transport and Shipping Ministry's move to re-introduce the ferry service between Tuticorin and the Island Nation), the report said. Jayalalithaa had sought the intervention of Dr Manmohan Singh to defer the proposal for re-introduction of the ferry service and pointed out the role played by the LTTE, the political developments in Sri Lanka, as well as its implications for national security and the internal security of India.

The Chief Minister, in her letter on 3 August, had also observed that a lasting peace with a durable political settlement needed to be reached in Sri Lanka before any commencement of ferry service between the Tamilnadu coast and Sri Lanka can even be contemplated.

JHU critical of govt and JVP: Sept 5 - The Jatika Hela Urumaya (JHU) has questioned what it described as the contradictions in the government's approach toowards the LTTE's ISGA proposals and alleged failure of the JVP in fighting for its position within the cabinet and government.

Leader and spokesman for JHU, Ven. Ellawala Medhananda Thera pointed that the JVP leadership was failing to make their opposition against ISGA felt within the government. He said that the JVP, though part of the government and holding cabinet portfolios, was still acting like a party in the opposition and were launching a poster and a public awareness campaign around the country instead of tabling their opposition within the government and cabinet.

Commenting on the JVP stand of initiating talks based on a final solution, Ven. Thera lamented that it was sad to see a 'nationalistic' party like JVP giving into the pressure of international and national peace brokers and LTTE.

"Since the Ceylon Workers Congress too is pushing for talks based on ISGA it is inevitable to see that UPFA government is heading for talks based on ISGA," he said adding that there would be no difference between the former UNF and present UPFA government other than the fact that UNF government was forthright about their stand on ISGA.

Rejecting the idea of talks with LTTE based on the ISGA proposal, the JHU leader claimed that the Tamil Tigers had no intention of finding a genuine solution but was only interested in achieving a separate state Eelam for which they were already strengthening themselves for the next war.

LTTE moves FDL into no man's land: Sept 6 - A group of LTTE cadres have set up a bunker moving its Forward Defence Line (FDL) in the no man's area in Jaffna's Nagar Kovil, according to local sources. This bunker was set up during the last few days and is a violation of the Ceasefire Agreement, military sources said adding that several armed LTTE men were seen engaged in constructing the bunker. Later the military had complained to the Ceasefire Monitors in Jaffna about the incident. "SLMM officials had visited the site and photograph the area," they said.

Monitors refused access: Sept 6 - The LTTE had prevented SLMM from inquiring into heightened Tiger activities in the government controlled Seelawathurai area in Mannar. A top Defence Ministry official is quoted as saying that the SLMM had complained to the Kilincochchi LTTE headquarters about the latest ground level actions against them by the Tigers.

The Defence Ministry lodged a complaint with the Ceasefire Monitors fourteen days ago stating that LTTE activities in government controlled Seelavathurai area had heightened during the last few weeks. It is reported that following the complaint two officials from the Mannar SLMM district office had tried to go to the area through Arippu, which is also controlled by government forces. But when the monitors reached Arippu, LTTE cadres had prevented their access and asked the SLMM to turn back. A second attempt to reach the Seelawathurai area was also turned down by the LTTE.

Strike to paralyse railways: Sept 6 - The JVP plans to cripple rail services in three weeks unless their coalition partner - the SLFP - takes steps to restore the Railway Department. The JVP-led Organisation for Protection of the Properties and the Rights of Railway Employees has warned Premier Rajapakse of the impending strike. The organisation's Secretary Sumathipala Manavadu in a letter to Premier Rajapakse dated September 3, has reminded him that he (the premier) too was involved in a joint trade union action against the scrapping of the department and the establishment of an authority. The JVP and the then main PA opposition claimed that the setting up of an authority was to pave the way for the privatisation of the services.

The previous government secured parliamentary approval for the hotly disputed Railway Authority Act last year. The JVP and the SLFP jointly campaigned against the previous government's decision to privatise public transport. Manawadu has said that the UPFA shouldn't continue with what he termed the previous government's privatisation policy.

Tamil Students Federation HQ opened: Sept 6 - The headquarters of the Tamil Students Federation (TSF) was opened in Jaffna Monday, 6 September. The headquarters is located along Kovil Road, Nallur in Jaffna."The headquarters will bring to the notice of the international community the violations of fundamental and human rights of Tamil students in

the northeast," TamilNet quoted Mr. P.Nilakshan, President of the TSF as saying while presiding over the event.

Jaffna University Vice Chancellor, Professor C.Mohanadas unveiled the name board of the headquarters. Rev.Fr.Karunairetnam of the Human Rights Commission of Tamileelam declared open the building. Thamileelam Students Organisation Head Mr. Nalan hoisted Thamileelam National Flag and TSF President Mr.Nilakshan hoisted TSF flag. TSF Secretary Mr.Archchuna and the Head of the International Thamileelam Students Federation Mr.Kannan, lit the common flame of sacrifice.

Monitors of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) visited the site on receipt of information that Tiger Flag had been hoisted in violation of the ceasefire agreement but they withdrew on being informed that the site where the flag was hoisted was private land, the report said.

Peace Foundation commends Mahanayake: Sept 7 - The Inter Religious Peace Foundation has commended Ven. Thibbotuwawe Sri Sumangala Mahanayake Thera of the Malwatte Chapter for boldly coming forward to initiate a dialogue with the LTTE with a view to finding a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem in a manner acceptable to all parties. The foundation in a press release issued recently said the Malwatte Mahanayake Thera's intervention in this matter is timely and it would earn the honour and respect of all races and religions in this country. The foundation which has requested the Mahanayake Thera to pursue this matter in collaboration with Mahanayake Theras of all Nikayas and participation of all other religions has also sought an opportunity for some religious leaders to meet the Mahanayake Thera to pursue this matter further.

SLMM wants pull back of FDLs: Sept 7 - The Head of the Nordic Truce Monitors have requested a pull back of disputed Forward Defence Lines of the Army and the LTTE in Nagarkovil in the Jaffna peninsula as they were located 'too close' to each other, according to SLMM Acting Chief Hagrup Haukland. He told journalists on 6 September,

"We are proposing that the FDLs be pulled back to an agreed distance by both parties." Asked about the complaint by the Sri Lanka Army on the LTTE moving ahead of the FDL by constructing new bunkers, he said the SLMM would take up the issue with the two parties. "We are optimistic that the issue can be resolved if the two parties can come to a compromise to pull back the FDLs to maintain a clear distance. The distance will be decided by mutual agreement of both parties," Haukland added.

New Muslim alliance: Sept 7 - A cross-section of Muslims in Sri Lanka and abroad have got together to form the "United Muslim Ummah" (Arabic word for Community), which will be officially launched on 8 September in Colombo.

The formation of the new party is reported to have the support of many Muslim MPs from the UPFA and UNP along with intellectuals, undergraduates, university dons, academics, community leaders and professionals etc. who had prepared a 'super constitution' unlike the present SLMC constitution which helped the leader to be very rigid and dictatorial, the spokesman claimed, a spokesman for the new alliance said.

He said, "The new party will have real democracy prevailing under the 'super constitution' which will not allow a one man show as in the SLMC.. The leader would be guided by the 15-member Sura Council who would be guided by the supreme council consisting of 40 member professional Majilis and 40 member politburo which will function with independence."

The new party would invite all leaders of Muslim parties, especially the SLMC leader Rauf Hakeem, to dissolve their parties and to join the New United Muslim Ummah in the interest of the community and letters of invitation would go to all parties as this would be best forum for Muslims to speak in one voice.

Inquiry into human skeleton discovery: Sept 7 - The Nelliady Police Monday, 6 September, commenced investigation into the discovery of human skeleton suspected to be that of a young woman in the Vallaiveli area in Vadamaradchchi division in Jaffna on the orders of the Point Pedro Magistrate Mr.K. Ariyanayakam, according to a TamilNet report. The human skeleton was found on September 5, Sunday morning in a shrub in a Catholic cemetery along Mandan Road, which branches off Point Pedro-Jaffna road.

Meanwhile Vadamarachchi political division of the LTTE has brought the discovery of the human skeleton to the notice of the Jaffna regional officials of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), the report added. HRCSL Jaffna officials visited the site and inspected the skeleton, and later contacted the Nelliyady Police regarding this discovery.

Lanka borrows $570m from ADB: Sri Lanka will borrow $570m (£322m) from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) over the next two years. The money is part of a programme which aims to boost spending on infrastructure such as roads, and projects that try to boost education. The ADB also wants to promote building in the north and east of the country, areas which have been hit by conflict. Funding will be dependent on the economy continuing to grow, as well as an ongoing programme of reforms.

The ADB said that future economic growth "depends crucially on the progress of peace talks" with Tamil Tigers. Other key factors will be the country's widening budget deficit, global economic growth and crude oil prices, the ADB said.

US counterterrorism official to visit Sri Lanka: Sept. 7 - Head of the US Department of State's Office of Counterterrorism Ambassador at Large J. Cofer Black, is scheduled to visit Colombo shortly, the US embassy in Colombo said in a statement. While in Colombo, Black will meet with officials from the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry and representatives of the country's police and military. Black was sworn in on December 3, 2002 as the State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism with the rank of ambassador at large, the statement said.

Black's responsibilities include coordinating US government efforts to improve counterterrorism cooperation with foreign governments, including the policy and planning of the Department's Antiterrorism Training Assistance Program, it said. The US government supports the Norwegian-brokered peace process in the country and has called on the Tamil Tigers to renounce terrorism and resume stalled peace talks with the government as soon as possible.

Indian Navy Commander to Visit Sri Lanka: Sept 7 - Indian Navy Commander Admiral Arun Prakash will make his first foreign visit to Sri Lanka from 12 to 16 September. During his four day visit to the island, the Indian Navy Chief will call on President Chandrika Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, Deputy Minister of Defence Rathnasiri Wickremanayake and Secretary of Defence Cyril Herath, and the three service commanders.

Admiral Prakash will also visit Anuradhapura, Kandy to pay homage to the sacred tooth relic and Trincoamlee. The Indian Navy Chief will address cadets and officers of the Eastern Naval area and will spend one day in Trincoamlee with the Sri Lankan Navy Commander. He is also expected to observe the deployment off the East Coast.

Defence Officials say that the new Indian Navy Commanders decision to visit Sri Lanka first shows the importance of Sri Lanka to India and Admiral Prakash's visit would bring the two countries even closer. He is the first serving high ranker to visit Sri Lanka in recent times. Admiral Prakash who took command of the Indian Navy on 31 July this year is a highly decorated aviator who has flown Harrier fighter jets of the Indian Navy. He has also flown Indian Air force aircrafts during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. He is the recipient of gallantry medal Veera Chakra.

Sri Lanka Foreign Reinstates Property Tax: Sept 7 - The Sri Lankan Parliament has approved the reintroduction of a tough tax regime on foreigners who buy land in Sri Lanka. Many foreigners, especially Germans nationals, have bought land and constructed holiday homes in Sri Lanka. The previous government of former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe repealed the property tax as part of its efforts to woo foreign investors. ❑

Muslim Ethnopolitics and nation-building

Izeth Hussain

"Selfish and contentious people will not cohere, and without coherence nothing can be effected" **Charles Darwin**

The purpose of this article is to establish that the legitimate interests of the Sri Lankan Muslims will be best served by one or more Muslim ethnic parties which focus on those interests to the exclusion of practically everything else. There are two reasons for this. One is that the only kind of significant politics that we have in Sri Lanka are ethno-politics, a politics in which the focus is on the promotion of ethnic interests.

The other reason is that there has been a disastrous and comprehensive failure in nation-building in Sri Lanka, and furthermore there does not seem to be any prospect of effective nation-building taking place in the foreseeable future. Under these circumstances our Muslims really have no option but to engage in ethnopolitics, just like practically every other ethnic group.

I must make some clarifications before proceeding further. By the term 'Muslims' I am really referring to the Moors who constitute the largest ethnic group among the SL Muslims, all of whom are called 'Muslims' because they follow the same religion of Islam. It is up to the other Muslim ethnic groups, such as the Malays, to work out their own strategies on how best to secure their own legitimate interests. My emphasis is on the term 'legitimate' in 'legitimate interests'. No one, except for racists, can object to an ethnic group pursuing its legitimate interests, but of course there can be disagreement about what really constitute legitimate interests. I have in mind the rights and interests of ethnic minorities which are broadly accepted as legitimate by the international community.

More specifically, I have in mind the minority rights that are specified in UN Declarations and other instruments to which SL is a party. That the failure in nation-building has been 'disastrous' is shown by the fact that the preposterous peace process inaugurated by the last Government has been leading to a de facto Eelam, which may come to be extended and consolidated and may well prove to be permanent. That the failure is 'comprehensive' is shown by the recent sharpening of Buddhist-Christian divisions, with attacks not just on the fundamentalist churches but on some mainstream ones as well. The failure therefore covers sub-ethnic groups in addition to the ethnic ones. My final clarification is about the term 'ethnopolitics' which can be used both in positive and negative senses. In a positive sense it would mean that an ethnic group uses political strategies to get what is its proper due, and no more. In a negative sense it would mean that a dominant ethnic majority, or a peculiarly privileged ethnic minority, gets more than its due at the expense of others.

I will now try to establish that Sri Lanka's only significant politics is ethnopolitics, an exercise which does not seem to be particularly difficult as it seems to require not much more than pointing to the party composition of the present Parliament. The two major parties the UNP and the SLFP, which have been at the core of practically all our governments since 1948, are nominally national parties which are in reality ethnic parties. They are quite unlike the Indian National Congress as neither of them has been accepted unequivocally by the minorities as genuinely national parties. On the contrary, they have come to be seen increasingly by the minorities as parties having as their basic objective the establishing of Sinhala Buddhist supremacy in Sri Lanka. Many readers might object that charge could be made with some justice of the SLFP, always regarded as the party of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism, but not of the UNP which the majority of Tamils certainly supported between 1948 and 1956. The truth is that most Tamils of that time also regarded the UNP as basically a Sinhala ethnic Party, like its progenitor the Ceylon National Congress, but leading Tamil politicians like Ponnambalam and Suntheralingam hoped to change it from within. They came to believe later that they had failed, and the Tamil ethnic Federal Party relentlessly gained ground.

But what about the Muslims whose favourite party is supposed to be the UNP? I was a university student at the time of our Independence and old enough to understand some of the politics of that time. I can attest from first-hand knowledge that the Muslims of that time were far from regarding the UNP unequivocally as a genuine national party. They regarded it as basically a Sinhala ethnic party, as a 'communalist' party according to the parlance of that time, and D. S. Senanayake in particular as an out-and-out anti-Muslim communalist, whose one objective in regard to the Muslims was to get hold of Muslim business and put it into Sinhalese hands. They nevertheless supported the UNP, because the dominant Muslim elite consisted of businessmen and the only alternative to the UNP were the Marxist parties. In any case, the later emergence of the SLMC shows that a substantial body of Muslims refuse to recognise the UNP as a national party.

All the other parties of any significant weight in Parliament are recognisable as ethnic parties. The JVP may regard itself as a Marxist party but it is widely recognised as a Sinhala ethnic party. Almost certainly its non-Sinhala Buddhist membership and support are not very substantial. The JHU members are Buddhist monks, and the JHU itself is a Sinhala Buddhist party. The NE Tamils are represented by the TNA, while the hill-country Tamils have their own representatives. The Muslims are represented by the two wings of the SLMC.

The minority members in the two main parties look like marginalised figures. As for the Muslims in those two parties, their marginalisation is clearly indicated by the fact that they have had no say in the peace negotiations.

The power of ethnicity in our politics seems to be attested by the fact that we have for some time been having an absurd form of democracy, a minoritarian democracy under which the minority ethnic parties can act as king-makers, getting at naught the will of the majority. It

is arguable, however, that this is the fortuitous consequence of our absurd electoral system and therefore too much significance should not be attributed to it.

But the presence in Parliament of twenty-one TNA members does seem to have a very exceptional significance. None of them can claim to be democratically elected. Certainly, Sampanthan and most of his associates may have got elected if there had been free and fair elections, but there were no such elections in their areas according to the polls observers. Their presence in what is widely regarded as the most democratically elected of all our Parliaments since 1977 is therefore an anomaly. But this anomaly has not drawn protests from within the Parliament itself, not even from the JVP and the JHU.

An explanation might be possible along the following lines. The LTTE is certainly not the sole representative of the Tamil people, but equally certainly it is the sole representative of the Tamil people that is equipped with credible fire-power. Without that LTTE fire-power there will be no Tamil ethnic problem, and that means that a solution of the problem requires that there is a coming to terms, above all, with the LTTE.

It follows, that the TNA members as the proxies or representatives or associates, or whatever of the LTTE have a very special position, not in terms of democratic principle but in terms of a hard reality, namely the ethnopolitics of the gun. We see therefore that the undemocratic ethnopolitics of the gun has been installed right inside a democratic Parliament. Nothing more eloquently attests to the power of the ethnic factor in our politics. In dealing with the underlying cause for our ethnopolitics, namely the failure in nation-building, I must firstly go into in excursus on some of the implications of the terms 'nation-state' and nation-building.

The nation-state is not one of the eternal verities, not part of the natural order of things. It is a form of state organisation that came into vogue after the French Revolution and spread in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the extent that after the Second World War the entire globe came to be divided into nation-states. There are some very negative features to the nation-state which need not preoccupy us as they are not relevant to the purposes of this article.

There certainly has to be something very positive about the nation-state. Otherwise, it could not have exerted what looks like an almost universal appeal for about two centuries. Part of the explanation for this appeal is ideological. According to the modern idea of the nation all its members, including the prince and the pauper, are together in a secular unity. This ties up with the idea of equality and the ideology of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which led to the upsurge of the Western masses, beginning with the American and French Revolutions. The modern idea of the nation can thus be seen as emancipatory and revolutionary, certainly as a progressive phenomenon.

There is also a sociological explanation for the appeal of the nation-state. Science made possible the creation of wealth with better living standards for the people. This required economic units of a certain size, which could function without tariff and other barriers, and also a relatively cohesive mass of people who could act together as a unit, as members of a nation. The sine qua non for creating the sense of a national unit was thought to be a common system of mass education.

I want to emphasize one point before proceeding further. The nation and the nation-state in their emancipatory and progressive sense require that people be brought together, not pulled apart. Unfortunately, most nations are built around a dominant majority ethnic group, and that means that there is a propensity in nationalism to slide into racism. If racism is carried too far it can under certain circumstances lead to the break-up of a nation-state. Consequently, nationalism and racism should be seen as clearly distinct from each other. In fact, they should be seen in terms of a binary opposition. It should be apparent from what I have stated above that nations and nation-states have to be built. A nation is not a primordial reality, something that has existed from the dawn of time, but something that emerges from a historical process. It is an 'imagined community' that has to be 'invented', according to terms and conceptions that are widely prevalent today. In the period of decolonisation from 1947 to the early sixties there used to be much talk about the need for nation-building in the new Afro-Asian states.

It was seen as a desperate need because most of those states had artificial frontiers which did not correspond to ethnic divisions. On the other hand, it was assumed that there was nothing about the nations in the nation-states of Europe. In more recent decades however, as a result of drives for autonomy or outright separation in Europe, it has come to be realised that those nations were also 'invented'. It might be supposed that the two oldest nation-states in Europe, France and England, had at their core a large majority ethnic group with few other ethnic groups to be brought into a national unity. That is certainly not true of France.

A multiplicity of ethnic groups was brought into a national unity, through a process of assimilation, by the centralising state that functioned from the Ile de France. As for England, the heterogeneity out of which English identity was forged is suggested by a curious fact, which struck me while reading the Introduction to Seamus Heaney's great translation of Beowulf. The entirety of the action of that poem, said to be the national epic of England, takes place in what is today the territory of Scandinavia and none of it in today's English or British territory. The truth is that in Britain also the English nation and later the British nation were 'invented', establishing a unity with an underlying diversity, and they were 'invented' by the same process as in France, that is to say by the State. An interesting book on this subject is The Identity of England by Robert Colles, published in 2002 (available at the British Council Library).

He argues that for over a thousand years state institutions played an absolutely critical role in forming the identity of England.' As he puts it, "In England the state came first, and the rest, whatever we call them nation, people, land, country, territory, identity - came second." By 1801, a British identity was invented, bringing together the four nationalities of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, who were represented in a single Parliament.

All that was certainly a success story, but as Colles points out, "Given their great diversity, nations have a propensity to fragment." That propensity began to manifest itself in the 1940s, but the realisation of what was happening took another forty years to sink in. He writes that from about twenty years ago, critics and historians started asking the national question again, a questioning that had assumed greater urgency over the last decade. In illustration of that point he lists no less than twenty-nine books on the national question, almost all of them published after 1990, including books by some of Britain's top intellectuals such as Tom Nairns, Roger Scruton, and Simon Schama.

The above excursus on nation-building provides some of the standards by which we can judge the Sri Lankan failure in this field. The role of the State is said to be often crucial for nation-building, and in my view it is always crucial in bringing about the high degree of homogeneity that is supposed to characterise the nation in the modern nation-state. The process of nation-building requires the bringing together of diverse ethnic and other groups, not pulling them apart, and is therefore incompatible with racism. Finally, the unity of the nation is always brittle because of the underlying diversity, which means that after a nation is built its unity has to be maintained by what would amount to an endless process of nation-building.

In the Sri Lankan case there was at the time of Independence an understanding about the State's responsibility for nation-building, but the process followed was more and more that of pulling ethnic and other groups apart, and not of bringing them together. It appears retrospectively that though there was an understanding about the State's responsibility, there was no understanding about the complex processes that could be required for nation-furthermore that it could be a never-ending process. We seem to have begun in 1948, with two initial handicaps. One was a sense of complacency bred by the contrary with India where Hindu-rioting had been endemic for decades and ethnic cleansing had assumed genocidal proportions in 1947. In Sri Lanka, there had been a few Buddhist-Catholic clashes in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and anti-rioting in 1915 which today looks like a bagatelle in contrast with our later ethnic horrors. It seemed to most Sri Lankans that cool good sense and a pragmatic accomodativeness would lead to successful nation-building here unlike in India.

The other handicap was a far more serious one. Unlike India, we did not begin our Independence with an authentic national party, unequivocally accepted as such by the minorities. Retrospectively, it seems to me that there was a profound historical reason for that unfortunate fact. During the four and a half centuries of Western colonialism the Buddhist majority came to be underprivileged and by the time of Independence some minorities were seen to be over-privileged to an extent that would have been regarded as intolerable by any ethnic majority anywhere in the world. In that situation any leading political party had to legitimate itself by having as its first priority the correction of that ethnic imbalance. We were therefore doomed to ethnopolitics from the start. The situation was similar to the one in Malaya. At the time of independence the indigenous Malay 'Bhumiputras' had been almost reduced to a numerical minority in their own country, and were educationally and in other ways backward compared to the immigrant minorities. A resort to majoritarian ethnopolitics was practically inevitable in that situation, as in the case of Sri Lanka.

In order to correct the ethnic imbalance the Malay government resorted to what is today called 'positive discrimination' or 'affirmative action', which elicited a broad measure of understanding from the minorities. However, it seemed for some time in the late sixties that violent ethnic upheavals were inevitable, but somehow in subsequent decades the politics of ethnic accommodation have worked satisfactorily enough. The trajectory of ethnopolitics in Sri Lanka has been very different. It cannot be seriously disputed that the ethnic imbalance created by the colonialists was corrected by 1975, with the successful assertion of the dominant position of the Sinhala Buddhists. Unfortunately, in that process there had been an accumulation of Tamil grievances. But their removal and moves towards ethnic harmony seemed a relatively simple task by the time the new Government took office in 1977.

However, what happened then was the totally unexpected inauguration of State terrorism, which reached its apogee in 1983. What had been a straightforward ethnic problem was transformed into a serious separatist problem by the ethnopolitics of the gun. The trajectory followed was therefore very different from that of Malaysia. I believe that difference cannot be explained without taking into account, among other things, an authoritarian and hierarchical drive among the Sinhalese.

However, no culture is a monolith, all of a piece, and it would be mistaken to try to explain in a deterministic way all that went wrong on the ethnic front in terms of an authoritarian and hierarchical drive, though that certainly has been powerful among the Sinhalese political elite. The point is that the forces of modernisation have been operating in Sri Lanka for four and a half centuries, denting our traditional value systems. The ideal of equality is not alien to us, and I believe that the requirements for nation-building, namely the avoidance of discrimination and the positive fostering of a sense of inter-ethnic togetherness, would have been broadly acceptable to the Sinhalese people.

But evidently that was not acceptable to the Sinhalese political elite at the level of the state. I will now make a few observations on their record of discrimination against the ethnic minorities and their failure in promoting ethnic harmony. 'Sinhala only' of 1956 is now widely recognised as an act of stupendous ethnic folly, and so more or less is the other major cause for Tamil grievance, 'standardisation' in education of the early seventies.

I have detailed data on grotesque discrimination against Muslims by the 1977 UNP Government, which must establish it as one of the worst anti-Muslim governments in the world. But I will not go into such details here, because at present there is a widespread view that even if there was discrimination in the past there is none now, and therefore the case for Eelam or even devolution of power becomes invalid. Likewise, my case for Muslim ethnopolitics would also be held to be invalid. The proponents of that ar-

gument would certainly hold that by the time the 1994 PA Government came to power discrimination was a thing of the past. But, as I have pointed out above, Britain where a British identity was successfully established as far back as 1801 began to show divisive strains in the 1940s, strains which have now become a major preoccupation. I drew the moral that nation-building should be regarded as a never-ending process. That should mean that multi-ethnic countries, such as Sri Lanka, would be well-advised to have mechanisms to try to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all ethnic and other groups. That could serve as a prophylactic against future discrimination even if there is none now.

An enlightened Minister of the 1994 PA Government Prof. G. L. Peiris, mooted an Equal Opportunities Bill and put it to public discussion. A storm of protest followed, backed by arguments showing a demented racism. I am certain that Bill would have got majority support, but the Government rather hastily withdrew it. That was taken as a victory for the lunatic fringe racists. In my view that fiasco showed that the SLFP, like the UNP, is a mainstream racist party. Members of the international community who noted the fiasco would have concluded that the commanding heights in Sri are in the grip of backward racists.

It might be thought that at the present juncture, when we can slide into an irreversible de facto Eelam, the Government will eschew anything that smacks of racism like the plague. It is surprising therefore that among the forty or more Ministry Secretaries appointed so far there are only two Tamils, and not a single Muslim. A newspaper pointed out that both Tamils have been appointed to Ministries that will be dealing with Tamil sectarian matters. That fact can be taken as showing that the thinking of the Government is still essentially ethnopolitical, not national.

It may be that there is not a single Muslim — and only two Tamils — senior enough in the Administration and able enough to merit appointments as Secretaries. If so, the Government should establish that case and publicise it. Otherwise, the perception of racist discrimination will continue, and continue to rankle among the minorities. I know that this is a talking point in Muslim circles.

However, according to established form, it will be most surprising if the Government does try to establish that case. The reason is that none of our governments since 1948 appears to have grasped that successful nation-building requires the positive fostering of inter-ethnic togetherness, not just the negative avoidance of discrimination. I will now provide some examples to substantiate that charge. Since the 1970s there have been a series of anti-Muslim ructions, ranging from minor incidents to very serious rioting. After one of the worst of them, the Hulftsdorp riots of December 1993, I wrote an article in the Lanka Guardian urging that the underlying causes be addressed, concluding with the last line of Brecht's play on the rise of Nazism, "Therefore, learn how to see and not to gape." The gaping continued and so did the rioting. Under the last PA Government the Mawanella riots precipitated a chain of developments that led to the downfall of that Government. The strategy of gaping was shown to be a mistaken one.

From 1998, for a couple of years I wrote a weekly column in the now defunct Weekend Express, which I used to discuss the anti-Muslim ructions that were going on. I concluded with articles analysing what seemed to be the underlying causes, the most important of which was certainly the misperception that the Muslims are a very wealthy community. In the early 1980s there was a Marga Institute study, which established that none of our ethnic groups was better off than the others. As the statistical and other material in that study were outdated I urged the Government to sponsor an up-to-date study. Nothing was done, of course.

Successful nation-building requires the taking up of the question of the minorities as a whole, and not just the Muslims, being privileged at the expense of the Sinhalese majority. Former President D. B. Wijetunge used the striking metaphor of the tall forest tree, the Sinhalese, whose life was being choked out by creepers, that is the minorities. More recently Dayan Jayatilleke referred (Sunday Island of April 18) to the UNF Government's 'Cretinism towards the electorate, which has a Sinhala (and underprivileged) majority ...'

The Government should investigate such charges, and if found to be true eliminate minority privileges forthwith.

Alternatively, it should take action against the airing of such unfounded charges under new legislation. The usual view is that it is the Sinhalese Buddhists who are underprivileged, while the Sinhalese Catholics and Christians together with the ethnic minorities are overprivileged. That is why the understandable rage over unethical conversions led to attacks on the fundamentalism churches and also on the Catholics and other mainstream Christian churches. The Christian hierarchies dealt with the problem with admirable restraint.

If those charges were true, they would point to a shocking ongoing failure in nation-building. If untrue, the State authorities have been very remiss indeed in failing to publicise the facts, which again would show an incomprehension about the requirements for nation-building. Finally, I must point to the significance that our absurd electoral system has in a nation-building perspective. It enables a minoritarian democracy under which minority ethnic parties can act as king-makers, nullifying the democratic will of the majority. Understandably, that provokes Sinhalese hatred towards the minorities. It has long been recognised that the problem can easily be solved through an adaptation of the German proportional electoral system. But our two major parties have ignored the problem, while the poisoning of ethnic relations has been going on. The reason for that should be obvious. Neither of our two major parties has attached the slightest importance to nation-building. I believe that the above material should suffice to establish that our only significant politics is ethnopolitics, the consequence of a comprehensive failure in nation-building, and therefore the most sensible political strategy for the Muslims is to have one or more Muslim ethnic parties which focus on legitimate Muslim interests. I will now make some concluding observations.

The pursuit of legitimate Muslim interests means that a Muslim ethnic party should be prepared to co-operate with any government that happens to be in power. Circumstances may make that im-

possible. In that case, unless it is established that is due to the fault of the government, the leadership of the Muslim party should be changed or that party should be abandoned as having failed in its responsibility towards the Muslims.

I will provide a concrete illustration of how a party can go beyond legitimate Muslim interests. The SLMC is against a constituent assembly. But the method of changing the Constitution impacts in no way on legitimate Muslim interests, and therefore should be a matter of supreme indifference to the SLMC and the Muslims. On the other hand, constitutional changes, that is to say changes in the fundamental law of the land, can impact in innumerable ways on Muslim legitimate interests and Muslim parties should be fully involved in making such changes. The best way of demonstrating the importance of having separate Muslim ethnic parties is by looking at the problems posed by Muslim-Tamil relations.

The LTTE has been insistent that peace negotiations begin with the use of the ISGA proposals as a base, proposals that could entail far-reaching Constitutional changes that will certainly impact on Muslim interest. But at the same time the LTTE insists that Muslims representatives be allowed into the negotiations only at a later stage. The Government and possibly the UNF also could cave in to the LTTE insistence, even though that would amount to a monstrous injustice against the Muslims. The Muslim representatives in the major parties will have to more or less toe the party line. Only a separate Muslim party can forcefully articulate the Muslim position without being trammelled by extra-Muslim Party loyalties.

There is the problem also of who is to represent the Muslims. Those in the major parties can become suspect as servitors of Sinhalese interests. Members of Muslim parties, on the other hand, have a much better chance of gaining credibility as servitors of legitimate Muslim interests who are not pushing hidden agendas.

There is a distinct possibility that the Eastern Province Muslims can become the object of ethnic cleansing. That could happen even if satisfactory constitutional arrangements are worked out on paper. The Muslims cannot reasonably assume that any basically Sinhalese government will be prepared to start fighting again, jettisoning a Sinhalese-Tamil accommodation, for the sake of the Muslims. A foretaste of what could happen was provided last year when the armed forces looked on while the Muslims were being savaged in Muttur and Kinniya.

This situation cries out for a truth and reconciliation rapprochement in the EP, irrespective of what goes on at the negotiating table. Muslim ethnic parties with substantial support in the EP, not Muslim politicians in the supposedly national parties, can play a crucial role in such rapprochement. I must conclude by emphasising that it would be mistaken to think that Muslim ethnopolitics will strengthen the forces working for the disintegration of Sri Lanka. The case for ethnopolitics, a politics in which primacy importance is given to ethnic and other group identities and affiliations, requires conceptualisation in much greater depth than is possible in this article. I will here merely state the basic idea.

In countries such as Sri Lanka it is a mistake to try nation-building on the basis of the Western liberal conception of an unmediated relationship between the individual and the state, a conception in terms of which group affiliations are of secondary or of no importance at all. In Sri Lanka we have been pretending to follow the Western model, whereas group politics is all-important. The problem is that our group politics are enacted in a shame-faced surreptitious way, which gives rise to the constant perception that ethnic and sub-ethnic groups are trying to secure much more than their legitimate interests, and are doing so at the expense of others. It is this more than anything else, in my view, that has been rending Sri Lanka apart for fifty years and more. The corrective must surely be found in a sane and healthy ethnopolitics under which all groups and sub-groups are allowed what is legitimately due to them.

The contrast with India is striking. There the importance of the group factor in politics is much more readily acknowledged. That means the diversity of India is taken into account and transcended, so that 'unity in diversity' is much more than a slogan there. Unity is helped also by the universal aspects of Indian civilisation, shown for instance by the Brand ecumenicism of some versions of Hinduism. Consequently the Italian Sonia Gandhi is assimilated as an Indian, even to the extent that she becomes acceptable as Prime Minister. Anything comparable is unthinkable in Sri Lanka. We must make it thinkable. ❑

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ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS

IN MEMORIAMS

Loving Memory of Our Beloved Mother

Born : 12.8.1916 Died: 24.9.2000

In loving memory of **Mrs Pathmavathy Selvanayagam** of Jaffna, Thamil Eelam on the fourth anniversary of her passing away on 24th September 2000.

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Still loved, still missed and very dear

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Remembrance of My Ever Loving Husband
Sivagnanam Gratian Nirmalanandan
Passed away on 30th September 2001

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That's because Love doesn't have an ending.
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When we wait upon the Lord, his strength becomes Our sure reward

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In Ever Loving Memory of Our Dearly Beloved Daddy
Mr. T. J. Rajaratnam Retired High Court Judge

Called to rest 15-9-81

Treasured memories keep you near
As time unfolds another year
No need for words except to say
Still loved, still missed in every way.

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by your ever loving wife Arul; children Rohini, Renuka, Rajiv; sons-in-law Vijayan, Sriharan; grandchildren Vasi, Ravi, Prathi, Jayanthy and Ajit.

Third Anniversary Remembrance

In ever loving memory of
Mr. Kanapathypillai Sitsapesan
on the third anniversary of his passing away on 5th September 2001.

Remembered with love and affection by his children Manoharan and Savithri; daughter-in-law Rebecca; son-in-law Varathan; grandchildren Holly, Daniel and Luxmmi and brother K.Yogeshwaran (Sri Lanka)

– N.Varathan, Flat 15, Girtin House, 44 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JQ. Tel: 020 8404 6541.

FORTHCOMINGS EVENTS

Oct. 1. *Sankadakara Sath urthi; Feast of St. Teresa of The Child Jesus*
2. *Karthigai; Puraddasi Sani (3); Feast of the Guardian Angels*
4. *Feast of St. Francis of Assisi*
6. *Feast of St.Bruno*
7. *Feast of Our Lady of Rosary*
8. *Feast of St. Dennis*
9. *Eekathasi; Puraddasi Sani (4)*
11. *Pirathosam*
13. *Amavasai; Navarathri starts*
14. *Feast of St. Callistus I*
16. *Last Puraddasi Sani (5)*
17. *Sathurthi*
18. *Sashti; Feast of St. Luke*
21. *Saraswathi Pooja*
22. *Vijayathasami; Manam boo; Keethara Gowri; Iypasi Velli (1)*
23. *Eekathasi*
24. *Feast of St. Anthony Claret*
25. *Pirathosam; Feast of the Forty Martyrs of England & Wales*
27. *Full Moon*
29. *Karthigai; Iypasi Velli (2)*
31 *Sankadakara Sathurthi*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couple on their recent wedding.

Suganthan, *son of Mr.& Mrs Sivaratnam of Dr.Subramaniam Road, Chunnakam, Sri Lanka and* ***Shawmini,*** *daughter of Mr & Mrs Bahawan of 4280 Linden apt 3, H3S 1T6, Montreal, Quebec, Canada on 3rd September 2004 at Sivayogam Wedding Hall, 180/186 Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7EJ.*

Shankari, *daughter of Krish & Gowri Gunaratnam of 1414 Lake Fraser Court S.E., Calgary, AB T2J 7G4, Canada and* ***Jereme Nathan,*** *son of Frank Haack Jr and Susan Maginnis of 5211 Jacknipe Court, West Richland, WA 99353,USA.on 9th September 2004 at Hindu Temple, 13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, Nebraska.*

A Great Step by Shobana Balaratnam

It was a step in the right direction for Shobana, daughter of Mr and Mrs Balaratnam of Northwood, Middlesex, for having treated a packed audience to an elegant display of Bharatha Natyam on May 8th 2004 at Beck Theatre, Hayes, Middlesex. In the process, she was able to generate over £4000 for her chosen charity, the Jaipur Foot Programme, Jaffna.

The high standard of the evening's performance was not unexpected. Shobana has graced many stages and halls with her refined performance to the delight of thousands of music and dance lovers since her Bharatha Natyam Arangetram in 1995.

The arrangements of this charity fund-raising event went smoothly as clockwork. Shobana's Guru Smt. Selvaluxmy Ramakrishnan, of the Lakshmi Art Centre, could even afford many smiles throughout the evening and so could the rest of the artistes who were all very much at ease. Shri K. Rajasekharan (Chennai) on vocal, Shri Balachandar- Miruthangam, Shri Sivaganesh- Violin, Shri Raghavaraman-Flute and Priya Sellaturay on Thambura, all combined to produce a marvellous fusion of musical sounds that graced the airwaves in the auditorium. Shobana's rhythmic, graceful movements and expressive eloquence with varying degrees of speed, greatly enhanced and maintained the excitement levels among the audience, who responded with thunderous applause at every opportunity.

It was truly a successful evening of 'mission complete' for Shobana, in terms of the quality entertainment provided, organisation, purpose and achievement. Her love and devotion to this fine art was clearly shown and her dedication, and that of her parents, have helped her to come this far.

This charity event was organised in association with the Tamil Union of Herts, who has been in the forefront of the various organisations championing the cause of the needy Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka. This arrangement had come in the wake of their 20th year anniversary celebrations.

The Jaipur Foot Programme, Jaffna , launched in 1987, is an initiative of the 'mothers' front' and rose out of a desperate situation, when thousands of lives and limbs were lost due to indiscriminate bombings, shellings and mine blasts

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in the war ravaged North and East of Sri Lanka. It has grown steadily as the foremost Prostethic/ Orthotic Organisation in the North and has since fitted thousands of artificial limbs to the unfortunate people. Apart from fitting artificial limbs, their activities also include: provisions for the manufacture of rubber foot pieces, fitting of upper limbs, making and fitting of calipers, orthotic braces, orthotic shoes, orthopaedic appliances or assistive devices for children and adults with congenital deformities.

They also manufacture tricycles, wheelchairs, crutches, walking aids and white canes, which are supplied at cost. The Jaipur Foot Programme also offers hostel facilities for amputees free of charge, educational grants for the limb users, medical advice, counselling services and rehabilitation programmes for the needy people.

It was a rare and heart-warming initiative from the younger generation that was worthy of high commendation and that should inspire and give hope to future generations. Congratulations Shobana!

Further information can be obtained from the Tamil Union of Herts on 01923 463466 or Mr. Balaratnam on 01923 829103.

- Logan Rasiah

Rhythm and Melody in Perfect Harmony

North York's Poslum Theatre in Toronto, Ontario was the venue on Sunday, August 22nd 2004, of a rhythmic explosion of percussion music with vocal lead, when teenagers Sivayogan and Sivakumaran Sivananthan staged their mridangam arangapravesam, the debut performance. They were accompanied on the kenjira by their guru, Muthkrishnan Balachandar, Dr. Sri Ram Suriyanarayanan on the ghatam and Balu Raguraman on the violin while their cousin, Sivapriyai Sivashankar played the honeyed drone, the tambura.

Their aunt Sivasakthy Sivanesan of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan of the United Kingdom, a Carnatic vocalist of great standing and a well-known sishya and gurukula resident of the late much-revered Yalpanam Sri N. Veereamani Iyer, led the debut concert. Artistes Balachandar and Balu Raguraman also hail from the same institution.

The evening's performance before an elegant and erudite audience and the eminent presence of Professor and Mrs Trichy Sankaran of York University, Toronto, began with a welcome speech in impeccable Tamil by Sivagowri, 5-year old sister of the mridangam debutantes; instantly this young lady enchanted everyone into appreciative attention and admiration. Kids of her age hardly speak Tami in Canada; exceptions like her are a pride in our cultural armoury.

The arangetram commenced with a Varnam in Gambeeranattai raga, a composition by Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna. This was followed by Muthuswamy Dikshitar's 'Sri Maha Ganapathi' in Gowla raga, Sadhinchene in Arabhi, and Saraswati in the same raga..

As Sivasakthy flowed from one lyric to another with her mellifluous singing and her nephews playing the mridangam with complete competence and confidence, the synonymous meanings of the names Shiva and Nandhi, sacred and precious to our faith in all-pervading Creator were eloquently expressed through an aptly chosen repertoire of compositions in ragas appropriate for the occasion. The rhythmic explosion was gracefully soothed and sweetened with melodious singing; they were in perfect harmony as if Lord Shiva and His consort Parvati were themselves performing the tandava and the lasya in the background. It was an enormously elating experience.

The piece de resistance of the evening was Karthikeya, a composition of Papnasam Sivan in Todi raga. As befits our music and dance traditions, Sivasakthy is very much focused on their spiritual aspects and Karthikeya, a stirring devotional, was sung with profound passion and deep sentience. Her inspired singing no doubt had an immense impact on her nephews who followed it up with their thaniavarthanam. It was a rousing and highly motivated performance that sent the audience into a state of hushed eagerness until it broke out into a deafening applause of appreciation of their mastery.

The final part of the evening was marked with three lyrics before the Thillana, Another Dr Balamurali Krishna composition; the rendering of it was scintillating. It was as appropriate finale to a lovely evening before Sivasakthy sang the Thiruppuhal in pious gratitude to bring the recital to a close with Mangalam.

Sivayogan and Sivakumaran gave a great promise at their arangetram. Theirs was a disciplined performance bearing all the signs of their devotion, determination and dedication to this art. However, their youthfulness was evident in their ebullience, energy and enthusiasm and the joy they got from their entertaining presentation; an observation to their credit because these generate happiness. There was innocence and delight, and exuberance and gladness and each one was supportive and appreciative of the other.

Apart from Professor and Mrs Sankaran , the evening was also graced by another mridangam maestro of great fame, Thiruvarur Bhaktavatsalam and the resident of the Thamil Isai Kalaamanram, Mr Thanpiah Sripathy. In his illuminating address on the finer aspects of mridangam and its sanctity, Professor Sankaran also said that the evening's audience was a very knowledgable one evidenced by silence that pervaded the auditorium and whenever appreciation was appropriate, it was given with decorum and dignity.

During this summer, the South Asian community has been treated to a few arangetrams and recitals in the various disciplines of Carnatic Music and Classical Indian Dances that have reached good standards. This has been possible through the commitments of dedicated gurus and enlightened leaders, composers, choreographers and authors, and parents who are increasingly appreciating the need for our young people to draw their nourishment from our cultural roots. In this, the Sri Lankan Tamil Community in Canada has also good reasons to be proud that the foundations they have been laying to promote these arts are now bearing good fruits.

The mridangam arangetram of Sivayogan and Sivakumaran indicated the welcome involvement together if Indian and Sri Lankan artistes and enthusiasts, and equally, that of institutions promoting our traditional arts on either side of the Atlantic Ocean.

- Victor Karunairajan

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Richards Karunairajan's "Dances of India"

"Dances of India", the recently published book authored by Richards Karunairajan is to be commended for its comprehensiveness in its coverage of dance, as practiced in the Indian subcontinent. The thoroughness of the research that has gone in is unquestionable. Every attempt has been made to underline the diversities in the different schools that have developed on a regional basis while also emphasizing the similarities, thereby rendering the common thread intact for one to discern the pervading denominator.

Bharatha Muni's "Natya Sastra" has been generously invoked, and rightly so, just as Freud by psychologists. Significant contribution to the development and enrichment of Indian Dance, the art form, in general could perhaps be attributed to so many even after Bharatha Munivar but in the passage of time some landmark innovations may still get attributed to Bharatha Munivar for purposes of authenticity though there is no question that his was the grammar or foundation on which Indian Dance had been built.

Our legendary Avvaiyar is believed to have lived for 400 years! Subsequent attempts at making things a little more realistic are the assertion that there indeed had been more than three Avvaiyars at different eras. Though qualifying to be discounted as historical myths, in-depth scrutiny of such may be deemed irrelevant in the scheme of things, particularly as obtaining in a distant future.

What really matters is the perpetuation of the index contribution enriching life, irrespective of the realm. One would care less whether Alexander Fleming or Isaac Newton invented antibiotics! They are useful to save lives and that is all that matters to the beneficiaries down the line. The author could not, of course, avoid reference to The Dance, that of Thillai Natarajar in Chidambaram. Anantha Coomarasamy's interpretation of the cosmic dance comes to mind with the mention of Thillai Natarajar. A cynic would, perhaps, assert that reading a little too much into things should be conceded both as a virtue and a weakness with intellectuals. In defence it may be said that their anxiety at elucidation, limiting their reach to the wavelength of the not so erudite and/or sophisticated audience is a testament to their humanity. They deserve mention in history as they, certainly, understood the why and the wherefore of things more than what they were sharing, not because they did not want to but because they knew that the multitude cannot handle the truth, as it were. "Kadavul kovippar" was a better deterrent to children, and adults too were treated as grown up children!

This world, as we know it, could have been quite different if not for the likes of Buddha, Jesus, Ghandi and Mandela to name a few who made a difference. Not every one of them had a 'religion' named after them, of course. Hinduism, as the author points out, is indeed a way of life and not a religion. In the same light, so called 'religions' should be looked upon as gigantic cults, the originators having had such a sway at the times they lived and sometimes long afterwards, primarily due to the fact that humans innately abhorred 'bad' and embraced 'good' and quite naturally, 'good' prevailed. All this, of course, after 'good and bad' got generally defined in the context of humans' gregarious nature and the imperative for inter and intra dependence.

It is tempting, indeed, to think that the greatest invention of man is God or the concept of an Omnipresent Supreme Entity than vice-versa. Mankind is better for it and has been best served by this stroke of genius than any other within the understanding of mortals. This notion does not, per se, make one an atheist, does it? One has to believe and understand the significance of "ANBEY SIVAM". Though attributed to Hindu sages, Jesus, for instance, has not said anything different, has He? Humans are ordained, if you will, to 'suffer' and God as the redeemer keeps us sane, for, in His absence, the infidels (not in the usual sense) will be filling up asylums (the lunatic kind) put up by the believers all over the planet of ours.

Perhaps in view of the title chosen for the book, the author, unlike this opinionated writer, has steered clear of any discussion with personal input though he had the prerogative to do so. The topic 'Devadasi Controversy' is a case in point and this has been handled quite subjectively and with sensitivity though he had left nothing to conjecture with respect to culpability.

Rukmini Arundale from without and Balasaraswathy from within, to mention just the names familiar to those in our time, brought about a social revolution, so to speak, the former with the connections and the latter with her strength drawn from her superlative command of the fine art of dance itself.

The sheer beauty of dance apart, the most pertinent contributing factor for the success story with respect to the growth, development and sustenance was the austere treatment particularly of "sringara" rasam with the underlying thesis that the entreaties is to none other than the Almighty with whom the dancer's soul craves union. Thus appeasing moral sensibilities of social crusaders ever in search of issues, like politicians, the stage was set for a smooth onward journey for this singular art form not only to flourish in the sub-continent but also enjoy universal acceptance and patronage.

Accomplishment must be measured by comparison to the genuinely accomplished. Lest the lay population is led astray by peddlers of sub-standard material it might indeed be relevant to examine some aspects determining aesthetic merit in dance. True, one could learn Nritha, Nrithiya and Abinaya as best as could be taught by a teacher and have the debut, seemingly the ultimate objective of most students.

Still, even to a layman, one appears to dance better than another. The difference is in the perfection of the movements and poses, which may be directly related to the objective physical, and mental energy (one strangely complementing and supplementing the other) expended in execution, which, in turn, manifests as beauty to be discerned by the informed and the lay people alike.

The teacher, unfortunately, cannot do much about this since that spark has to come from within, with a totally personal understanding, appreciation and commitment to the subject and theme of the dance itself. The criteria are subtle so as to be understood and applied only by the informed but the effect has universal appeal. This is true for any art form and not for dance only as the artist enjoys universal acclaim when the art transcends a threshold.

The author's reference to 'art' which patently lacks aesthetic merit but still corrupting society with its sheer commerciality - referring to contemporary 'dance' of some variety is certainly valid and will resonate with informed opinion. Yes, mass appeal cannot and should not be the yardstick when one has to choose between 'good ' and 'bad', though the beneficiaries could, pathetically, put forward the 'greatest good to the greatest number' argument, in support, especially when it still gets sold as art!

The author, Mr. Karunairajan, born

a Christian needs to belong and that dictates loyalty to his roots. This notwithstanding, by the very definition, the fact that he is an ardent subscriber to Hindu thought is abundantly manifest in his writing. Love, magnanimity, tolerance, detachment etc, the corner stones of Hindu philosophy which, in its totality is summed up in "ANBEY SIVAM", seems to be his creed and this world will be a better place if it abounds with the likes of him to carry his silent message, succinctly implicit in his epilogue wherein he echoes words of Shaw and Toynbee, both unequivocally extolling the virtues of the Indian way for human salvation.

- S.Sridas

Bushany Kalyanaraman released two of her latest CDs in vocal music on the 8th of August at an auspicious function at the Sivan temple auditorium. The release function, was officiated by Munaivar Srimath Kumaraswamy Thambiran of Tharmapuram Aatheenam and the function was followed by a two-hour recital by Bushany.

Bushany is a renowned carnatic vocalist and is amongst the top rankers in Chennai today. Her greatest gift is her voice richly sweet and expressive and her music is of shruti suddam, bavam enriched and has tonal beauty and sustained alignment of the voice with sruti. She has substance and style. She sang excerpts from the CDs. She took the stage after the release ceremony, without any qualms – the making of a mature and professional artiste. The organisers of this event must be credited for creating the right ambience by adorning the stage with a huge statue of dancing Siva. This created the right ambience for the objective of the evening.

The first composition in CD 1 is Namashivaya Vazhga by Maickavazhgar. This surely must be a homage and dedication to her guru/husband, the famous vocalist of GNB Genere. The accompanying temple bells expressed the divinity in the music which no doubt is for the soul. The balance of the compositions are theatrical. The singing accompanied by an excellent orchestra dramatised the compositions. The songs Addum Chithambaram (Behag) by Gopalakrishna Bharathi, Sadananda Thandavum (Bahudari) by Achudadasar, Kalai Thookki (Yadukula Kamboji) by Marimuthupillai, Addikondar (Mayamala gowla) by Muthu Thandavar described the dance of Lord Siva at Kanagasabai, Chithambaram. These as dramatised create excellent theatre. The balance of the songs Sabapathikku (Abogi) by Gopala Krishna Bharati, Eashane by Papanasam Sivan, Innamum (Keeravani) by Gopala Krishna Bharati, Engunnan (Dijavanthi) by Thuooran described the glory of siva. These can be choreographed into beautiful dance items. In fact the whole CD is dance theatre as sung with emphasis on the drama which unfolds. This coupled with the type of ambience created on the stage constitutes dance drama. I am inclined to name the CD 'Addum Chithambaram'. The ragams chosen by the composers were very apt imaginative and poetic.

The orchestration by Embar Kannan (violin) with Mridangam by D.A. Srinivasan, flute by P.V.Balasai, Veena by A.K.Thevi and percussion by Jeyachandran excellently dramatised the dance of Siva. It is theatrical, no doubt a dance theatre. The whole CD can be scripted and choreographed into a dance drama.

In CD 2 – 'Thirumuruga Thiruvarul Thaa' comprises fourteen compositions on the glory of Muruga. The wit, intellect and valour of Murugan are all contained in these compositions. It is little wonder why the Tamils are passionately devoted to the second son of Siva. There are only very few Tamils who are yet to pray at the six abodes of Murugan in Tamilnadu. After a long time, since the output from Sundarambal the songstress on Murugan we have a collection sung in Tamil by Tamil composers. Bushany's rendition justifies the imagination and poetry of the composers.

There are three compositions: Shanmugapriya (Ragamalika), Kuramagal (Kalyana Vasantham), Thirumurugan Thiruvarul Thaa (Yaman Kalyani) composed by her guru Kalyanaraman. These are excellent compositions and one is tempted to suggest to Bushany to produce a CD of his compositions. Other compositions Ennenna vilayadal (Ragamalika) by Guru Nadai Thooran, Karathinil (Valaji) by Kavingar Vali, Unnai Allal (Simendra Madyamam) by Koteeswara Iyar, Muraga Muruga (Saveri) by Thooran would be good choice to be choreographed into dance. Overall, Bushani gives ample opportunities to create a dance theatre.This CDs are recommended to all students of music, rasikas and connoisseurs of music. These should form part of a vocalist repertoire.

I listen to Bushany every season when I attend the Chennai Music Festival in December from the Kalyanaraman days when he launched and directed her to succeed at the concerts. We were then proud of this blooming young Srilankan making headway in Chennai. Then, I heard her vocally accompanying Chandraleka dancers performing at the Hongkong Art Festivals in 1994. Now listening to her in 2004 I am very impressed by a mature and vibrant vocalist. It is a success story: She was initially trained by her father, a Sangeetha Bushanam, S.Kulasegaram. Then she qualified as Sangeetha Vidwan in Tamilnadu Music College, Chennai securing the gold medal by passing in the first rank in 1976.

She returned to Srilanka and worked as Professor of Music at the Jaffna University. The ethnic turmoil in 1983 made her to return to India and become disciple/wife of Kalyanaraman thereby settling down permanently in India. It is under his tutelage she grew into a musician of recognisable stature. She until recently served as a visiting Professor of Vocal and Veena at Kalakshetra, the world famous Rukmini Arundale's school of dance.

She is now a much sought after artiste internationally. Her annual concerts have now become a regular feature. In the music festival of 1999 – 2000 she was awarded by the Music Academy 'the BEST vocalist' for rendering the Kalpana Swaras. In 2000 the Tamilnadu government bestowed upon her the title 'Kalai Maamani'. She is an

A grade artiste both in All India Radio and Srilanka Broadcasting Corporation. In a recent concert in Srilanka under the Aegis of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs the tile 'Gana Ratna'was bestowed upon her. The popular daily 'Hindu' reviewing this citation commented 'she is the only musician bridging the cultural gap between Srilanka and India'. Recently Hindu included her in the 'Women on top' awards.

In my last review 'Thamarai Pootha Thadagam' in the Tamil Times July issue I stated the expatriate Ealam Tamil musicians should aim to build the national archives by producing CDs and tapes.

- Siva Sivananthan

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